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FEBRUARY, 1955

# THE Liguorian

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LOVERS OF GOOD READING

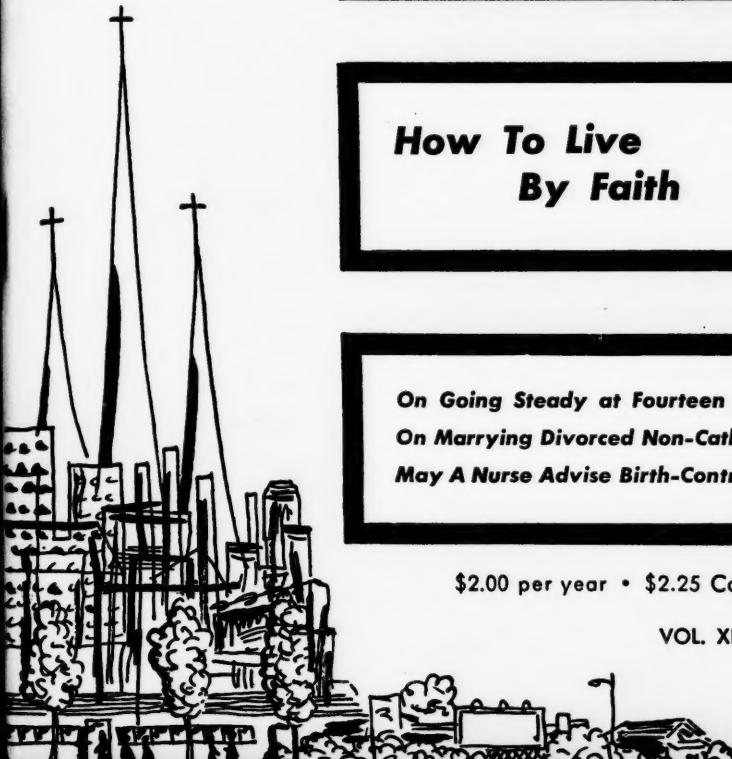
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**The Liguorian**  
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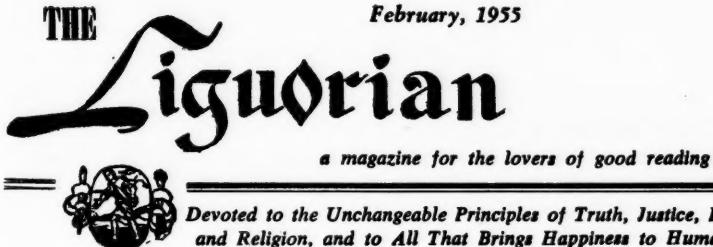
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February, 1955

## Is It Difficult to Become a Catholic?

The above question is here answered both for non-Catholics interested in the Catholic Church, and for Catholics who can help them by knowing something about their difficulties in approaching the Church.

*Donald F. Miller*

IT IS NOT unusual to meet with non-Catholics who, even though they have no deep-rooted antipathies for the Catholic Church, and may even feel attracted to it, have the impression that it is a very difficult thing to become a Catholic. It is even more common to meet with Catholics who have a fixed notion that it is exceedingly difficult, almost so much so as not to be worthy of any effort whatsoever, to be instrumental in leading non-Catholics along the path that leads to the one, holy, apostolic, Catholic Church.

This is being written, therefore, not to deny that there is or should be any such difficulty for either the non-Catholic in approaching the Church or for the Catholic who is helping him along the way, but to sort out and face the kinds of difficulties there actually are. If there really were no such difficulties at all, there would be no need for this writing. On the other hand, if the difficulties were not capable of being faced, analyzed and overcome, there would be no point in the invitation that is constantly held out to non-Catholics to approach and see whether they can

not find their only peace and salvation in the Catholic Church.

Upon examination of different types of individuals, and experience with a large number of them, it becomes possible to consider the difficulties of becoming a Catholic under three heads or propositions. They are the following:

1. *Accidentally*, there are certain grave difficulties that may stand in the way of a person's becoming a Catholic.
2. *Essentially* or *substantially*, there are never too great difficulties impeding anyone from becoming a Catholic.
3. *Practically*, there are always such difficulties as should naturally be expected and courageously overcome in pursuing so important a goal as that of finding the true religion and through it of saving one's soul.

In discussing these various types of difficulties, one must take for granted that the grace of God will be at hand for all who sincerely seek it. Not even those with the least of difficulties to face can become Catholics without God's grace. At the same time the principle always holds that to those who do what they can by themselves,

God never denies whatever graces they may need.

*1. Accidental Difficulties*

By the word "accidental" here we mean to characterize difficulties that arise from some special circumstances in a person's life which create an extraordinary road-block to their approach to the Catholic Church. They have nothing to do either with the essential appeal of the truth to the human mind, nor with the power of the mind to find and embrace the truth. Rather they usually stop a person from even making a beginning toward considering whether the truth may be found in the Catholic Church.

Here are several examples of such accidental or circumstantial difficulties as prevent some persons from even looking into the claims of the Catholic Church.

a. By far the most common of such difficulties is that which arises from having been subject for many years to a stream of misinformation and mal-education concerning the Catholic Church. There are thousands of persons in America who have had it drummed into their minds from childhood that many Catholic doctrines and practices are contrary to the teachings of Christ and of the Bible, and that Catholic priests and bishops and lay leaders are sinister characters seeking only the enslavement and impoverishment of those subject to them.

These individuals have never actually looked into the teachings of the Church that they have been told are anti-Christ or anti-Scripture, nor have they ever known personally any priests or bishops. Their education has been such that they don't want to, or feel that it would be wrong, to do so. It is as much a part of their intellectual convictions that the Catholic Church is

terribly and dangerously wrong as is the multiplication table. Obviously, this creates an extraordinary difficulty in the way of their ever entering into a study of why the Catholic Church claims to be the one true religion of Christ.

b. Another accidental difficulty that keeps some from looking into the Catholic Church is a way of life that is known to be contrary to what the Catholic Church lays down as the law of Christ for all her children. Most priests have met divorced and remarried Protestants who expressed this difficulty somewhat in these words: "I rather lean toward the Catholic Church. I'd really like to know more about it. But, you see, I've divorced one wife and married another. I know that divorced and remarried persons cannot be real, practicing members of the Catholic Church. At the same time I cannot and won't give up my present partner. So there is not much use in my thinking about becoming a Catholic."

The same difficulty is present for some non-Catholics who are practicing habitual birth-prevention, or living in a continuing state of adultery. They have a leaning toward the Church, but they know that their habitual sins, which they refuse to give up, would prevent them from being good Catholics anyway. So they do not follow up their leaning.

c. A third accidental difficulty that some non-Catholics find too much to overcome in this matter, is the possession of many human, worldly, social and rewarding contacts that would have to be lost or abandoned if they became Catholics. Many Protestant ministers who ultimately became Catholics have admitted that it took many years for them to face the prospect of giving up their families, their social

position, their influential friends, their clergyman's income, as they knew they would have to, in becoming Catholics. For many more the prospect of such losses is just too great a difficulty to be surmounted, though they are practically convinced that the Catholic religion is the one true religion of Jesus Christ.

d. One more accidental difficulty in the way of some people's looking into the claims of the Catholic Church is simply too much interest in sensible, material and worldly things. Their job and their ambitions, their home and its comforts, their recreations and amusements, their parties and vacations, are permitted to fill up their lives. They haven't the time nor the interest to be concerned about religion at all.

## 2. Essential Difficulties

By "essential" difficulties in the way of anyone's becoming a Catholic, we here mean such as might be connected with the very process of preparing to become a Catholic and submitting to the Catholic Church, even though there were no accidental difficulties like those mentioned above in the way. And here it is necessary to make a very sweeping and categorical statement: There are no essential difficulties connected with the process of becoming a Catholic, surely none that are too great for any normal person to overcome.

Every thinking person will admit the truth that, if there is one true religion, if there is any Church to which Christ wants all human beings to belong and through which they are to be saved, it must be essentially easy for any human being to find that Church, to learn at least its essential teachings and laws, and to become a member. No intelligent person would remain a Catholic very long, if being

a Catholic is not something that Christ made necessary, possible and attainable to all men for the salvation of their souls. The true religion, if there is one, cannot be a club or a fraternity for a few specially chosen or endowed souls; it must be the way of salvation for all.

Experience proves that it is not essentially difficult for anyone in any walk of life, with any background of education, to find and submit to the truth of the Catholic Church. Converts to the Church range from working men and women with only a minimum of schooling, to many of the greatest geniuses and intellectual giants of every age. All come to the same simple acts of faith and submission. All learn that Christ was God, the only Redeemer and Teacher of mankind; that He founded a Church to dispense the merits of His redemption and to continue His teaching without deviation to the end of time; that the one Church that corresponds to the words of His founding and the purposes and tasks He gave it is the Catholic Church.

It is because becoming a Catholic is essentially easy for all human beings that many are able to overcome, in doing so, even the extraordinary accidental difficulties listed above. Many who have been taught to fear and distrust and hate the Catholic Church from childhood, have finally, through reading or association with Catholics, come to know her true doctrines and her actual ministry and the relation of everything in her to the will of Christ, and have become the happiest converts of all. Many whose sins long kept them away from the Church have finally been driven by remorse and the need of God's pardon into the arms of His Church. Many who have lived for the

world and its good things have lived long enough to see their world collapse around them, and then sought refuge in the only place where it could be found, in the Church Christ founded for all.

Indeed, it is so essentially easy to become a Catholic, and so many with a million different backgrounds have done so, that it is only sad that so many others fail to overcome the accidental difficulties in their way, or do not bestir themselves into a serious seeking of the truth.

### 3. *Practical Difficulties*

Having said that it is essentially easy to become a Catholic, we must now add that this does not mean that it requires no effort, no bestirring of oneself at all. Becoming a Catholic, as thousands of converts will readily testify, is the greatest thing that can possibly happen to one. It transforms one's entire outlook on life; it gives a glorious goal to be striven for at the end of life, and it sets up lesser goals to be striven after each day that one lives.

It certainly could not be such a wonderful thing, if it did not require some effort to attain it. Becoming a Catholic is not like an accident that happens to one, nor is it a mere emotional experience. It is a fruit of personal human endeavor crowned by the grace of God. All human endeavors involve difficulties proportionate to the end to be attained. Becoming a Catholic marks the highest conceivable end that anyone can ever attain; it means becoming a child of God, a member of Christ's mystical body, a soul being guided safely and securely through life toward heaven by the will of the Son of God. There is work involved in reaching so great a goal.

The difficulties that non-Catholics may expect to meet with in the pro-

cess of becoming Catholics, as eminently proper and proportionate to the goal, arise from three sources. We are not here considering any of the accidental difficulties described above. Rather we are considering the non-Catholic who feels that he should know more than he does about the Catholic Church, who perhaps has an insistent curiosity in his mind about her, perhaps even a kind of leaning toward her. Such as these may experience the following natural difficulties in getting closer to the Church.

#### a. *The difficulty of making the first contact with someone who can help him to learn more about the Church.*

Most non-Catholics who have a sincere curiosity about the Catholic Church, or a leaning toward her, have acquired these through reading Catholic material or conversing with Catholics. But the time comes when they can go no farther in their study, without calling on a priest. Many who are happy converts today tell vivid stories of what a terribly difficult thing this was to do.

The difficulty arises from a combination of several things. There is always a little fear that whispers: "Maybe all the horrible things they say about the Church and about priests are true after all." There is in many a kind of shyness that whispers: "Maybe they don't want to be bothered with me." There is the mistaken notion in many that approaching a priest and asking for further information about the Church is like diving off a cliff; this is based on the superstition that, by some occult means, the priest will force him to be a Catholic even against his will. None of these difficulties should be permitted to prevail. Going to a priest and asking for further instruction about the Church should be looked upon with

the same calmness and interest one would bring to asking a travel agent for information on various excursions, even though the actual issue involved is the most tremendously important one in the whole life of man.

b. *The difficulty of attending instruction classes and doing some private study and reading.*

No priest may accept a non-Catholic into the Catholic Church until he is reasonably convinced that the person knows all the essential teachings of Christ as handed down through His Church, and expresses his intellectual and moral submission to what he has learned. This means that ordinarily a priest must instruct a prospective convert, either alone or in a group. The number of instruction periods required will vary according to how much the non-Catholic already knows about the teachings of Christ and His Church. Usually anywhere from ten to twenty instruction periods will be needed.

So the non-Catholic has to arrange his schedule to attend the instructions, and to apply his mind to learn what is being taught. This is a difficulty for some, especially for those who thought that all they had to do was to say that they wanted to be Catholic in order to be received at once into the Church.

But if such persons will think for a moment, they will understand how indispensable are the instructions. Christ came down into the world both to redeem mankind and to teach mankind. He spent almost three years *teaching*, and all that He said, both what is recorded in the Gospels and what He entrusted to the apostles, must in some manner be reviewed by those who wish to become His faithful followers.

From another angle, the necessity

of instructions must be clear. Being a true follower of Christ or a member of the Church He founded constitutes a way of life—a new way of life, a supernatural way of life, a way that leads to the vision of God in heaven. Surely one who thinks of entering upon this new way must learn what it consists of, what its duties are, what its helps and rewards are. That is what is taught in the instructions given to a prospective convert. He cannot believe rightly in Christ unless he knows what Christ taught; he cannot be obedient to the laws laid down by Christ, directly or through His Church, unless he knows what those laws are.

It is tragic that there are some persons who lean toward the Church, who permit the difficulty involved in taking instructions to keep them away. The time spent at those instructions and the energy expended on a study of how all that the Church teaches may be traced back to Christ are a small price to pay for the privilege of finding the one true road to heaven.

c. *The difficulty of making the final act of submission to the authority of the Catholic Church as Christ's true Church in the world.*

Some converts will have little difficulty in making their final act of submission. Once they have had the doctrines of the Church explained to them, and have seen how perfectly reasonable they are or how clearly contained in Christ's words, they cannot wait for the day to arrive when they will be accepted into the Church and accorded all the sublime privileges available to her children.

But some have great difficulty in making their final submission, despite the full recognition of their minds that the Church represents the truth in religion. Cardinal Newman struggled with this difficulty for a number

of years before he became the great Catholic that he was. This difficulty may be due to family backgrounds, or pressure from old friends, or last ditch efforts of the devil to raise a turmoil in the soul.

Whatever the cause, the one sure means of offsetting this difficulty is that of prayer. Indeed, every non-Catholic who begins to think about the Catholic Church, or to take instructions, should be saying daily prayers for God's guidance and grace, and that even before he has learned enough about the Church to be sure that he wants to become a Catholic. God's grace will come in abundance to the one who prays daily to Him, and will make all difficulties seem as nothing in the face of what is finally to be gained.

This article may therefore stand as a repetition of the perpetual invitation held out by the Catholic Church to all outside her fold—to come and see whether she does not have what their minds are seeking and their hearts desiring and their souls needing. Especially is it directed to the many thousands who have been living with the thought of learning more about the Church for a long time, but have done nothing about it.

It is also a reminder to Catholics of the many ways in which they may be able to help a non-Catholic friend over some of the difficulties the latter must face. It is easy for a non-Catholic to become a Catholic, if one who already possesses the joy of the true faith helps him at the moments when it *seems* to be hard.

*Prayer For Press Month*

The following beautiful prayer for the Catholic Press, which appeared in *Banner*, might well be recited by all Catholics for the spread of good literature during the month of February.

"Dear Lord, we daily pray, 'Thy Kingdom Come.' May we constantly realize that the printed word in advocacy of Thy claims is one of the surest and most dependable harbingers of Thy soul-saving principles and promises.

"Make us zealously spread through Catholic literature Thy eternal message in homes and circles where love for Thee is neglected or Thy doctrines opposed.

"Convince the leading faithful that they cannot be true and effective champions of Thy cause without being correctly enlightened and properly enthused by constant and intelligent reading.

"Strengthen and fructify the efforts of our prelates and priests so as to increase a hundredfold the beneficial effects of the Catholic Press.

"Inspire our editors with the encouraging thought of Thy divine trust reposed in them and make them duly aware that unless they are men of prayer and piety, possessing prudence and intellectual honesty, their guidance may be in vain.

"Let the fulfillment of our daily supplication be hastened to realization by our honest and sincere determination to see a Catholic publication in every home."

# About Going Home

**Francis M. Lee**

Some of the basic and inescapable facts that yearly lead thousands to Christ the Son of God, and into the Church He founded for all mankind.

“APOLOGY” is a word that has taken quite a beating. It used to be a dignified explanation for one’s actions; today it rather means a denouncing of one’s actions. It used to mean “Here is why I was right.” Today it means “Here is where I was abysmally wrong.” Thus, in the last century, Cardinal Newman wrote a book called “Apology for my Life.” He had become a Catholic, and the book explained why he converted. The Cardinal quietly cut his accusers into small, square pieces, and the pieces he threw softly away.

Let us grant at once that this Newman type of apology is rather the peculiar privilege and province of the convert, and hence these offered lines shall be but a rambling in and out of convert minds, back and forth across the chasms of their doubts, up and down the side-avenues to faith.

Communism, despite itself, is making a wonderful contribution to the stability of thought in those who sincerely seek something in which to believe. For, communism has taught us that freedom of a certain kind can be the end of all liberty. Lots of good Americans thought that our Constitution gave anybody the freedom to get up on any soap-box and say his piece, any piece. The communists got up. And then the generous Americans be-

gan to realize there was something wrong in this deal. These Communists were using the freedom of speech, all right, and they were using it to overthrow the United States government and the Constitution on which it rests. That kind of freedom of speech could eventually destroy our liberty and our country. We recognize a little better now that freedom of speech means “within the framework of our democracy,” as set down by our major doctrine, the Constitution.

In the foregoing thoughts we have concluded that freedom of speech can be dangerous if we do not work within the framework of the cold fact of our United States Constitution. Did we ever stop to think that all this might be true about freedom in religion! There is a certain framework, there are a lot of cold facts about faith, and we must work within that framework, within those cold facts, if we are sincere in our approach to God.

Arnold Lunn, a brilliant convert to Catholicism, affords a very striking instance of such dangerous freedom in this sphere of approach to religion. He was attending a meeting of scientists, and the question of miracles was brought up. One eminent scientist at once arose to say that such a discussion would be a waste of time since miracles were impossible. Lunn was

shocked. This was a group of men, dedicated to science, and science had ever insisted that it was interested only in facts, in physical evidence. Yet here was a scientist who announced that miracles were impossible, and this man would not even look at the facts or physical evidence in the case.

And there is always the blind negation of Emile Zola who had witnessed a miracle at Lourdes. Zola had followed the case very closely; Zola knew the woman was miraculously cured; Zola came back and wrote a novel in which the same case was concluded with the woman dying. Zola was asked why he had deliberately changed the facts. Zola answered, in effect, that he would not believe if the whole thing were written across the heavens. Hardly within the framework of cold facts.

So ramble let us now, and look at some facts, and stay within the facts.

Just below the first rung of the ladder of any clear thinking along religious lines, we find those who call themselves agnostics. To be an agnostic means to say, "I give up. I simply do not know. No one can know anything about God. Nobody is sure of anything." And we at once see the fallacy of that kind of thinking because if such a man is certain that he can know nothing, then he is evidently certain about something after all. And an agnostic cannot be an agnostic after all.

And now the atheists. Well, I like the gentleman who said that man would either find his true God or carve one. Atheistic communism seems to have carved one and called it the "state." But just what is this "state?" Does it mean something like kneeling down and adoring Rhode Island, or,

all bickering aside, Texas? Joss sticks in the state capital? More likely the deity involved in Russia is a two-faced god of money and power, enthroned in the hearts of the gangsters who stole the birthright of Mother Russia.

And as to there being no god save a carved one, let us follow this thought. Would there be any possibility of a man who had never heard of or seen water, building a boat? In other words, you have to know what water is before you can even think or plan of building something that will float upright and make speed in that water. Now if instead of the boat, we would take the human eye, then the question would be, could anyone make the human eye all equipped for light, shade, color, opening, closing, and its thousand other delicate operations UNLESS HE KNEW AHEAD OF TIME WHAT THE EYE WOULD HAVE TO LOOK AT? In other words, it could not have been plain CHANCE, because the very idea of chance is that it does not, cannot, look ahead.

Let us at this time take a moment to remind ourselves that our human reason can but crawl to the edge of the canyon wall, faith will always be a jump, and we will always jump on the word of the God Who said we would land on the other side, heads up. So really we are rather investigating the facts that lead up to faith, searching out this process of crawling out to the edge of the canyon. And now, how far will human reason actually take us?

The mind, despite all that the philosophers and scientists have done with it, still has one great limitation; it knows only those things that are introduced into it through the eyes, ears, or such other senses of smell, taste and touch. If you were born without

any ability in those five senses, you could never get an idea beyond the fundamental drive of doing good and avoiding evil.

As a result, our reason works most surely and infallibly with the things that are most evident to the senses, such as rocks, and the involved chemical formulae. When we investigate life even in a low type, such as a tree, reason is not so sure of itself. Nobody knows yet how sap can rise more than sixteen feet in a tree. We can explain it up to there but from there on we just don't know. And when we approach animal or human life the greatest surgeon in the world will admit that much of the human body is shrouded in mystery. How many thousands of years passed before we found out in the last century that the blood circulated in the human body!

Imagine, then, how that mind of ours trembles when we leave off the physical things we can see, and begin to investigate the invisible, the perennial projects of human doubt; the existence of our soul, an after-life, a personal and eternal God. Remember, this is the human mind that does not know how sap gets up to 17 feet in a tree! This is the human mind that depends on what the senses bring in, and the senses are bringing in no direct evidence of these things. St. Paul says that the visible things of creation speak to us of the invisible God, His power and His glory. And the actions of a human being, especially of his mind and free will, lead to the recognition of a spiritual and immortal soul. But there are so many questions to be asked and answered about these tremendous realities. For the answers to many of these questions there is nothing left but faith, the steward of the invisible! Ask a mind these eternal

questions and the mind is silent as a tomb. Thousands of the greatest minds have asked, and the silence grew greater. Faith alone can crack the silence.

Yet all the time we want to insist that faith is leaning on the cold, hard facts. The Catholic calmly asks for the facts: "What happened on Easter morning?" The skeptic insanely insists, "The resurrection could not have happened." The Catholic says,—"Unassailable historians of every creed grant that the Bible is a true, authentic, historical document." What does this history say about Easter Morning? Christ rose from the dead, after He had deliberately hung His every doctrine and His very integrity on the fact and the promise that He would arise. This historical document tells me that, fifty days after He arose from the dead, His apostles went up to Jerusalem and preached His death and resurrection to thousands of Jews. Let us remember that no Jew had forgotten Good Friday with its crowds before Pilate's palace, with its terrible earthquake, with its darkened mid-day. **AND DO WE ACTUALLY THINK THAT THOSE JEWS WOULD HAVE STOOD THERE AND LISTENED TO THE APOSTLES PREACH ABOUT THE RISEN CHRIST UNLESS IT HAD BECOME ACCEPTED AS AN UNDENIABLE FACT ALL AROUND TOWN?** They would have laughed the apostles out of the city. No wonder a Christian asks, with steady voice, "What happened on Easter morning?" Christ had risen and set the seal of divinity on everything He had ever preached.

And to mind come those words of Dom Verkade, a Benedictine monk and gifted artist, who, while reading and arguing his way into the Catho-

lic Church, had this to say: "All that I have elsewhere heard and read of religion demands ten times more faith than does the inexorably logical doctrine of Catholicism." And Verkade had tried them all.

Remember, the Catholic Church has a standing challenge to anyone to prove that any one of her doctrines is contrary to reason. The challenge is two thousand years old, and has been in and out of court a thousand times. It still stands. Winner, and still champ.

And the tender beauty of W. H. Mallock's concept of the regard that Mother Church has for her children as they are born and live and die before her: "You must believe these things because I tell you I witnessed them myself, and you know that I am trustworthy. I do not refer you merely to written books, but to my continuous consciousness that is called Tradition. You can believe the resurrection securely because I was there and I saw it. I saw, with my own eyes, the stone rolled away; I saw the Lord of Life come out; I went with the Marys to the tomb; I heard the footsteps on the garden path; I saw, through eyes blind with tears but clear with love, Him whom my companion thought to be the Gardener."

Then, the terrible vitality that Cecily Halleck, another convert, introduces into the picture, with her famous pagan who cries, "Enjoy yourself, for you will be dead a long time," and her Christian, who laughs like a boy going home for the holidays, "Oh, no, I'm going to be alive for a MIGHTY long time!"

Our human heart swells at such a thought, and is our human heart so wrong? And this is the place where Johannes Jorgenson, another convert, says that the convert should allow the

coup d'etat of God, the divine stroke; throw away the past, the conclusions, the sins, the deception of self-will, the reasonings of fallen nature. You are face to face with the great pearl. It is time for the act of violence.

Give to your mind and heart these eternal desirables, your own immortality and that of your loved ones, and endless delight with a personal, loving God. Do not be afraid of these things because they may seem so pleasurable. Nature always uses pleasure as a sign of encouragement so that the purposes of physical life will be realized. Thus the pleasures of eating, drinking and procreation are there to encourage the human being to carry on human life. And so it is that the surge of desires for eternal peace and happiness is again an encouragement of nature to drive us on to the final fulfilment of that nature, or better, that supernature, in eternal life.

Perhaps a reader may think that by this time we have left off our promise of hard, cold facts and are simply grinding out gratuitous Catholic doctrine. Well, on the one hand, remember that our final conclusion is that there is no divorce between fact and faith, for the same God is the author of both, and contradiction is contradictory to the nature of a God. On the other hand, everything we have written is really based on cold, unassailable facts:

The fact that an atheist cannot explain the human eye unless he admits a thinking Creator, who foresaw the needs of a human eye and adapted it BEFOREHAND.

The fact that an agnostic cannot say, "I know nothing," since he insists that he KNOWS that he knows nothing. He admits knowledge and so destroys his position.

The fact that the human mind does

fumble even with natural truths such as electricity, the sap of a tree, the processes of the human body, and is silent when we ask it to answer the many questions that follow on our recognition of God and the soul and eternity.

The fact that Christ lived, taught, died, and rose from the dead, the latter statement being healthily proved by the fact that the apostles did preach his resurrection to the very people who were in at His death.

The fact that no one has ever proved that one doctrine of the Church was contrary to human reason.

The fact that it is harder to believe that Christ was suddenly a liar when He said He was the Son of God, and when He said, "This is My Body," than it is to accept His entire doctrine. It is harder to EXPLAIN AWAY the promise and actuality of the Eucharist than it is to EXPLAIN it. Remember the story of the minister who was reading the history of the Last Supper to his child, and came to those lines, "This is My Body," and began a lengthy explanation of what Christ really intended? The child would not hold still for it. "Daddy, didn't He mean what He said?" Four words. "This is My Body." Yes, child, He meant it.

The fact that we are humanly in love with the idea forever. Lovers pledge themselves that way. Why should not God?

And while we are on the matter of facts, let's face a few. There is a new Saint in the Catholic church. St. Pius X. He was exhumed last year, and placed for a while beneath one of the open altars in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. As you approached, you were overcome with the odor of roses; when you arrived, you saw his body

in a complete state of preservation. One bone has been removed from his leg, so that the faithful may have a relic of him. For a delightful nuance concerning God's relations with His dear ones, surgeons have also tried to remove a bone from the preserved body of little Saint Bernadette of Lourdes, but the blood ran so freely that they stopped the operation. She was already dead for over fifty years. The blood of St. Januarius is kept in a vial. It exists in a powdered state throughout the year, except on one day, his feast day, when again it becomes liquid and alive. We can investigate these facts, or ignore them. But we can't deny them, unless we deny the validity of both our senses and our reasoning processes, and become one with the deliberately blind Zola.

And just before we close, let us stand at the meeting place of some fine minds and — Catholicism.

John Moody, a man of Wall Street, met Christianity in the market place. He had this to say: "I had for some time harbored a strange notion that political, social and economic problems, are, at bottom, moral problems. And this notion, odd in our day among the pacemakers of modern thought, among many of our statesmen and business leaders, BUT NEVER ODD AT THE VATICAN, may have had something to do with turning my eyes toward Rome."

Jorgenson ran up against Catholicism in his quest for beauty. He criticized the lack of culture in the Church, after two thousand years of the finest minds and the finest talents. He found his answer one day in Assisi where he saw a group of nuns taking care of their orphans. He decided then that the Church was willing to sacrifice culture for charity. Not too much time for culture, but the life

time of any nun for charity.

It will be well to close these ramblings with the words of Arnold Lunn:

"Every convert from agnosticism passes through the stage when the intellectual strength of the Catholic case becomes apparent, and yet Catholicism itself seems fantastic. To a friend who was in this transition stage, I said: 'You will stick where you are unless you make the venture of Faith. All

that we can do for you is to show you that the arguments against Catholicism can be met, and that the case for Catholicism is infinitely stronger than any rival philosophy. But you've got to do the rest. If you are prepared to admit the force of the arguments for God's existence, why not resume the practice you discarded so many years ago, and ask His guidance and His help? '"

# Biblical Problem

Edward A. Mangan

## Peter the Rock

**Problem:** Catholics argue for their Church on the basis of the following text: "*Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*" (Matthew, 16:18-19) I have heard it said this text does not mean what we Catholics say it does. Could you explain it?

**Answer:** 1. First of all, the text is most certainly authentic. There is not one iota of evidence to the contrary. It was certainly written in the gospel of St. Matthew in the very beginning.

2. The text is the classic one to prove the complete primacy of St. Peter. Its classic, simple clarity is not fully apparent in any translation. In the original Aramaic language which our Lord spoke and St. Matthew wrote, the meaning of the text might be more literally given in this way: "Thou art the rock and upon this very rock I will build my Church. The powers of hell, or the citadel of hell, will not prevail against it (my Church). I will give thee full powers (no restriction whatever) and as a consequence your rulings will be confirmed in heaven." In this text, the name Peter is a derivation from the word "rock." Our Lord did not use the masculine name. He used the original word for "rock." As a consequence, the name "Peter" (Petros in Greek, Petrus in Latin) appears for the first time in history.

3. Because of Peter's firmness, not only his personal faith (which of course our Lord does intimate was the basis on which the Father chose him as head), but the Church which Christ was founding would be firm, impregnable against evils which would try to corrupt her, and Peter will have all authority even to legislate, which indeed the text refers to directly. The forgiveness of sins, indulgences, etc., are merely included in this fulness of powers.

The infallibility of Peter is surely intimated and included as a consequence of these texts, but we have other direct proofs for this dogma as well.

# Unwanted Books

*Ernest F. Miller*

Most public libraries pride themselves on having available important reference volumes, such as the Catholic encyclopedia, for all types of readers. Here is the story of one that was different.

**T**HERE IS a town in Minnesota where not so long ago the officials of the public library were reluctant to allow the Catholic encyclopedia to be placed on the shelves of the library.

The set had been given to the local priest by the Knights of Columbus. The idea was that the books be made available to all who could read and to all who wanted to read. As is the case in many towns throughout America, there was much wonderment in the minds of people about the Catholic Church.

This was not surprising. Outlandish and strange things had been said about the Catholic Church. From time to time fiery and fierce individuals came around to preach against the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church was said to be undermining the constitution of the United States and that, if vigilance were not exercised, it would not be long before the same condition would prevail here that prevailed in Central and South America, namely, the persecution and even assassination of Christians who based their religion on the Bible alone.

Of course not all the people believed these tales. A good number of them were sufficiently well educated to be able to distinguish falsehood from truth. They had met Catholics in their life who were nothing like the supposed ogres, tyrants and killers of the countries of the south. Probably the Catholics of the countries to the south

were not half so bad as they were made out to be.

Still, if you make enough accusations against a person or a group, some of these accusations are liable to stick. At least a suspicion is established in the minds of the people. That a suspicion had been established in the minds of the people in the Minnesota town was proved by the way the appearance of a nun on the street scattered those whom she came near as though they had been pitched into the midst of a burning house.

What could be better for the dissipating of this fog of misinformation and ignorance and fear than a set of books that discussed everything Catholic in a cool and dispassionate manner, without rancor and without recrimination? Such was the purpose of the Catholic encyclopedia. There were thousands of pages in it. Many of the articles were accompanied by pictures. Here one could really find out what the Catholic Church held in regard to the Blessed Virgin Mary, confession and the veneration of relics.

So thought the local Catholic priest. He could have put the books in his own private library if he had wanted to and then let it be known that, if there was anyone who desired to make a study of them or any part of them, he would be glad to grant the inquirer access to his house. Fortunately he was not that kind of a man. Very few men and women who were not of the same beliefs as the priest would dare

the dangers of the inner sanctum of a rectory. A thousand worrisome doubts about the Catholic Church would not be enough to force them to mount the front steps and ring the doorbell. Although they knew that they were foolish for even thinking such a thing, still the doubt persisted that perhaps there was some kind of a trap connected with the place where lived the priest. Thus, the encyclopedia would have gathered dust if it had remained in the priest's library. It would have accomplished no good.

A much better place for it was the public library. There were several reasons why it was a much better place.

First of all, the public library was a *public* library. It was for the people, for all the people, no matter what their religion or lack of religion. The public library was established and supported by tax money which came out of the pockets of the Catholics as well as out of the pockets of those who were not Catholics. Naturally, therefore, there could hardly be any discrimination against books that belonged to one religion merely because a few members of another religion did not like such books.

Secondly, the library already had a large section devoted to Protestant sermons, Protestant history, Protestant sects, and so forth. It seemed to be the custom in the town for people to bequeath to the public library any books that happened to touch on religious subjects. Many a minister's library had its place on the shelves. Not a word had ever been said against the acceptance of this kind of material.

Thirdly, the one place that a person thought of first when he wanted information about a certain subject was the public library. If the public library could not furnish him with the

information, that information would be very difficult to find. If a person desired information about the Catholic Church or about one or the other teaching of the Catholic Church, he would drift into the public library. Quietly he would search out the material that would answer his questions.

What a sad thing, then, if there were no authoritative book in the public library explaining the position of the Catholic Church! There was no doubt about it. The public library was the place for the new Catholic encyclopedia. It would do a world of good.

The first person the priest approached in regard to the encyclopedia was the librarian. The librarian was a woman, middle-aged, spare and sombre, business-like and efficient. One look at her was enough to prove that there was no nonsense about her. If she said no, a team of all-time all-Americans would not move her to say yes. She was the Alamo and the Alcazar rolled into one.

She did not say no when the priest suggested the encyclopedia as a worthy addition to the fine books the library had already acquired. She merely looked surprised. It was the first time in her life that she had ever spoken to a priest face to face. She had heard a lot about priests. She had even read that sometimes they wore false beards and slunk around in the performance of their nefarious tasks like spies in the enemy's country. However, this priest did not seem in any way dangerous. He was quite open-faced, quite simple. She could hardly imagine him going through second-story windows in order to poison the president or to prepare the way for the pope.

It was not an easy thing for the librarian to admit. But the fact was that, even though she had graduated from the university of Minnesota with

high honors, she had never heard of the Catholic encyclopedia. She wanted to know what it was all about. Would it stir up controversy? Would it set one religion against another? Could she have a look at the books before making a decision? The priest was amazed at the way she softened after the conversation had gone on for a little while. At first she was stiff and formal, watching out, it seemed, for trickery. When no trickery was forthcoming, she melted nicely and even broke into a smile when the priest cracked one of his jokes which his friends insisted were notoriously unfunny.

She looked at the books. She showed great interest in some of the articles. She said that she saw no reason in the world why the set should not be admitted into the library. In fact she thanked the priest for the very fine gift to the library. It was indeed a worth-while addition.

And so the day came when the public library for the first time in its history carried on its shelves a completely Catholic set of books.

Not all the people of the town liked the idea. They were the ones who had taken too seriously the speeches of the ex-priests. They were the ones who believed that the pope would land on the tip of Manhattan any minute if the government did not keep troops constantly on the alert.

There was one man especially who became extremely angry when he heard the news of the encyclopedia. He stormed into the library and reprimanded the librarian severely. But he did not get very far. He might just as well have tried to push over Gibraltar with his bare hands. He left the library in worse shape than he was in when he entered. But he did not leave

the library empty-handed. There was a certain book that he did not want anybody to see. That was the volume of the Catholic encyclopedia that treated of subjects that began with the letter "L". He felt that no Catholic could ever write with justice on Martin Luther. In fact he felt that no one should be allowed to read what any Catholic wrote on Martin Luther. Since the volume with the "L" articles had a lengthy article on Luther, it was only right to remove that volume from the shelf. That he did. He carried the book under his coat. The librarian did not see it. In fact, she did not even miss it. Perhaps no one would have missed it had it not been for a visitor who a few weeks later called on the parish priest.

This visitor was a man. He said that he was from another part of the country but that he was in this town on business. While he was here, he found himself becoming intensely interested in Martin Luther. He had seen the moving picture on Luther; he had read several pamphlets and books on him, and he had discussed the celebrated reformer with numerous ministers of various religions. But he was not satisfied with the information that he had received. He himself was not a Catholic. He had never even talked to a Catholic priest before. But he was interested in finding out the truth.

Here was the difficulty as he saw it. In a certain city of the country there was a Catholic priest who did exactly the same thing that Martin Luther did. Luther was a priest who gave up his priesthood and married a nun who had given up her convent. The American Catholic priest did the same thing. But the non-Catholics who were acquainted with the case held him up to scorn as an example of the looseness of the Catholic religion. Yet, they

praised Luther to the skies. Was Luther to be absolved and the ex-priest condemned even though both of them did the same thing? Was there any literature available that might explain this contradiction more clearly?

The priest assured the visitor that there was literature on hand that gave an unprejudiced explanation of Luther's action. In the light of that explanation the action of the American priest, or ex-priest, could be explained too. This explanation was to be found in a volume of the Catholic encyclopedia in the public library, the volume that dealt with subjects beginning with the letter "L".

So, the man went down to the public library. That was when it was discovered for the first time that the volume was missing. The priest could do nothing about it. The librarian could do nothing about it. The book was gone. That was all there was to it. Apparently somebody had stolen it. But who? And why?

Eventually the answer was found. The man who took the book was one of the most prominent and distinguished men in town. He was on various civic committees, he was a deacon in his Church, he was one of the head men in the bank. Well, the Catholic priest had occasion to call on this man one day. The visit was short. But it was not too short to afford the priest the opportunity to notice the missing volume of the Catholic encyclopedia on a corner of the man's desk.

For a moment he could hardly believe his eyes. It was conceivable that an ignorant man or woman might steal a volume such as the one that contained the life of Martin Luther so that it would not fall into the hands of the direct and indirect followers of Martin Luther. But for an educated man

to do a thing like that! The priest was astounded. He was so astounded that he did not realize that he was actually staring at the book even as the man was talking to him. The man saw what he was staring at. His face turned as red as fire. A moment later the interview came to an end.

The next day the volume was back in the library where it belonged. The librarian did not know how it got back. All she knew was this—one moment it was not there, and the next moment it was. By this time she was becoming quite friendly with the priest. She was just as disturbed as he was that someone should voluntarily set himself up as a board of censorship in a town that prided itself on its broadness and tolerance. The priest did not tell her what he had seen in the office of the town's most prominent citizen.

As long as the priest who donated the encyclopedia to the library remained in the town, the books remained on the shelves of the library. But the day came when he was changed to another parish. It was some time after that that I heard the story of the missing volume. I thought I would visit the library on my first opportunity to see what had happened since the departure of the priest. Only this happened—the encyclopedia did not win out after all. I looked for it throughout the whole library. When I could not find it, I approached the librarian. Her answer to my question as to the whereabouts of the Catholic encyclopedia was merely this: the directors of the library thought that it would be better to put more modern books on the shelves. The encyclopedia was taking up a great deal of space, and should be boxed up and put in the basement. If I cared to see or read the books, she would be happy to take me down to

### *The Liguorian*

the place where they were stacked in boxes. She was not in favor at all of taking important reference books off the shelves because a few influential people did not like them. But she was powerless. She was only the librarian.

I declined. I said that I was merely passing through town. I was preparing a series of articles on religious liberty. I thought that I might find some useful information in the Catholic encyclopedia. Its articles were reputed as being most scholarly and correct.

However, my research could wait. I could gather the information I wanted in the next town I visited. I was confident that not every public library in the country would have the Catholic encyclopedia in the basement where it could be reached only with a guide. This is what I told the librarian. In reality I had found what I was looking for. Censorship and suppression of books may sometimes be found in the strangest places.

### *Beliefs of A Catholic Workman*

I believe:

1. That work is not a curse from God but a blessing.
2. That a man should be proud to work.
3. That a man should be honest with his employer.
4. That all workers should be organized.
5. That all union members should take a part in union meetings.
6. That unions should not only get better pay and better working conditions for their members, but they should also educate their members to their dignity as workers.
7. That workers should in some way participate in the management, ownership and profits of their company.
8. That both labor and management should develop a greater social responsibility so that their decisions are not governed by selfish motives, but by a desire to promote the common good.
9. That I must strive to do all I can as a citizen and as a union member to promote full employment, comprehensive social security, a guaranteed annual wage, family allowances, and fair employment practices for all men.
10. That as a Catholic I will find in the Mass the source of my strength to promote justice and charity between worker and employer, between worker and worker, between the workers of this country and those of other nations.

*Pledged at 1953 Labor Day Mass, St. Francis Xavier Church,  
Chicago, Ill.*

### *No Excuse*

A certain banker was being called upon by a delegation from a charitable institution. He instructed his secretary to make some excuse for not seeing them.

"I'm sorry," she informed the delegates, "but Mr. Gotrocks can't see you, he has a sprained back."

"Tell him," said the spokesman, "we didn't come to wrestle with him, but to ask for a donation."

# Teen-Age Problem

Donald F. Miller

## On "Going Steady" at Fourteen

**Problem:** In a recent article you were asked by a girl of fifteen whether it was wrong for her to go steady. I think your answer, in which you said it was wrong, was a little foolish. I am fourteen years old. People say I am mature for my age. I have been going steady for six months with a boy who is four years older than I am. We have never gone any further than kissing. He has never tried to do anything immoral to me, and I think that this is true of many other young couples who go steady. Nowadays a boy and girl are not likely to be *in love* just because they go steady, so I believe parents should not think of marriage just because their daughter has a steady. I see my boy friend four nights a week. He has never interfered with my school work.

**Solution:** We have said before, and now have to repeat with sadness, that after a kid of fourteen has started keeping steady company and surrendering to the emotional experience of "kissing" (as young people use that word today), there is not much use in talking to her about the danger or wrongness of what she is doing. As in this case, she is just going to tell you that you are "a little foolish" or silly. Therefore these words are mostly directed to youngsters who have not yet gone off the deep end into love-affairs, who can still listen to and heed lessons of reason and experience. They are also directed to parents who have not yet permitted a fourteen-year-old daughter to go out four times a week with a "steady."

Our "mature" little girl says that just because a girl goes out four times a week with a boy, her parents should not think of marriage for her. It so happens that the natural moral law affirms that steady company-keeping is permissible only when marriage can be and actually is thought of as a possible outcome of the company-keeping within a reasonable time. Therefore the only circumstance that would make steady company-keeping lawful for our fourteen-year-old would be in case she (and her parents) were thinking about marriage for her at fifteen or so. If she has no thought of so early a marriage, and only wants the fun of going steady, and of kissing and hugging when the mood strikes her, she is doing serious damage to her soul and to her future by spending four nights a week on a date with the same boy. And only the bleak immaturity of her outlook makes it possible for her to think that this does not interfere with her education in any way.

All sensible parents should take warning from the above letter. They should tell their sons and daughters at the beginning of high school (earlier if necessary) that they will permit no steady company-keeping until at least the last year of high school, when marriage can be seriously thought about. Individual dates, on occasion, with different boys and girls, can be permitted but never anything like once-a-week dates with the same person, to say nothing of the four nights a week spent by the poor kid in the above problem with her boy friend.

# How to Live by Faith

Some examples of how faith should prove itself to be the real thing, not a useless and inactive possession of the mind.

*Mathias J. Huber*

SOME years ago, in the city of Baltimore, the son of a well known Jew became seriously sick. A Catholic friend of the Jew, knowing how dear the boy was to his father, wrote to the Carmelite Sisters asking them to remember the boy in their prayers. The Mother Superior not only had prayers offered for the sick boy but she wrote a consoling letter to the father telling him not to become discouraged, but to pray and trust in God.

On the day the Jew received the letter from the Sister, he met a friend, who in the course of a conversation boasted of being an atheist — boasted of not believing in God.

"So," said the Jew, "you do not believe in God? Well, one of these days, when someone dear to you is near death, you will forget about your atheism and think only of your God and run to Him. You may think that you do not need God, but I can tell you that I am one who needs God and wants His help."

We all need God and want His help. But look back only at the past week. What bits of evidence could we get together to prove that we felt the need of God in our lives and that we want-

ed or tried to get His help?

Sometimes things do get very rough for us. Life gives us a few hard knocks on the head and a few solid rights to the heart, and then, when we are hardly able to tell the difference between light and darkness, we begin to reach out for God. Then we want Him near us; then we want His help.

But why must we wait for sorrow, or pain, or sickness, or death, or financial reverses, to make us appreciate God and our religion? Why do we live through days and days, without giving the smallest appreciable indication that we believe in God, ignoring Him, forgetting Him, offending Him, neglecting our duties? The answer is simple: because we take the easy way of living just a natural life and forget to live by faith.

To live by faith. What does that mean?

Faith is a divinely infused virtue by which we believe, on God's authority, all that God has revealed and teaches through His holy Church. This definition of faith sounds very precise and theological and it is overwhelmingly comprehensive. We could spend a great amount of time in explaining this

definition very thoroughly, but it will be better for the purposes of this consideration to take the definition of faith as it stands and pass at once to an exposition of the practical side of faith, because we want to learn how to live by faith. To live by faith means to allow faith to blend with our life, to let faith guide us in all our actions, to let faith answer our doubts and solve our difficulties, to let faith help us turn to God and get close to Him and stay close to Him and to love Him. To live by faith means to get God's ideas into our head, to get His plan for our life laid out before us and find our way through life according to that plan and not according to the foolish plans we sometimes draw up for ourselves. To live by faith means to get faith into our mind, into our will, into all our faculties, our memory, will, passions, into all five of our senses. To live by faith means to put faith into our life and life into our faith.

What must we do to learn to live by faith?

Faith is a gift of God, and growth or progress in faith is also a gift of God, and we must, as a first step in learning to live by faith, pray for an increase of faith. We must ask for it. We must go to God and do all we can on our part to make it clear that we want more and more faith and tell God just that. "Lord, increase my faith. Lord, that I may see. Lord, I believe, but help my unbelief."

Secondly, we must not only pray for faith, but we must make acts of faith. Two excellent ways of doing that are found in the words of the act of faith and in the words of the Apostles' Creed. To say these prayers, to say them slowly, thoughtfully, humbly, sincerely, until the words begin to mean something to us, is a wonderful

means to help us live by faith.

However, we shall not say these prayers with understanding and meaning to ourselves until we take the third step, which is to meditate, to think about the truths of faith, the things God has told us, the life and teaching of Our Lord, and apply them one by one, again and again, to our life and to the world in which we live, even if it is the very little world right around us.

We hate to have others trick us or deceive us; but sometimes we wake up and realize that we have been doing a wonderful job of fooling ourselves. We look at the world through the eyes of feeling, blinded by sensual charms, wondering how this will affect our comfort and how that will restrict our freedom. What is wrong? The eyesight of our soul needs correction. When our eyes are weak we get the proper glasses. A Christian should be wearing, at all times, the glasses that are made in heaven, the eyes of faith. Without them we see everything from the wrong angle, in the wrong perspective; we see the wrong side of things, the wrong color and meaning in everything.

But how are we going to get these glasses of faith? Well, you are not going to wake up some morning and find them bouncing around on the bridge of your nose, and—oh, what a beautiful morning! Oh, no! The habit of living by faith is not something that comes over you suddenly like a tooth-ache or the measles. To gain it we must work and work hard, in spite of discouragement and failures, and keep at it and at it.

The saints did it, and they were just as human as we are. And a lot of people who will never be canonized as saints but who are living very close to God, are doing it right now, next door

to you, working with you, playing with you at the same card table or golf course. And, as St. Augustine said, if these can do it, why can't we? There is encouragement for us, if we are looking for it.

We read in the lives of the saints that they selected certain favorite sayings which were to them like echoes of the voice of God. But they meditated on them, thought about these sayings, rolled them around in their minds and memories until they began to get the real flavor hidden in them. They allowed these sayings to sink deeply into their consciousness until these principles began to be reflected in their thoughts, their words, their actions. They took these sayings and hung them up in the dark attics of their poor human minds and all within was illuminated; and they followed that light of faith to glory and perfection. And we? We in our ordinary lives do not even strike a spiritual match to get a little light when darkness comes upon us. We refuse to take that lantern of faith to guide our steps in the dark ways of life. We leave that lantern hanging on a peg and stumble and stumble and fall.

See, in a quick picture, what would happen if you were guided by the light of faith at every moment. A neighbor of yours makes a remark about you which is highly uncomplimentary. Let's be frank. It's what we call a dirty dig. It's not only dirty. It's mean. Your first reaction is to begin to swing from the heels to throw a knockout punch at him in the shape of another dirty dig. What you know about him! Human nature says to you, "Go ahead. Let him have it. He's got it coming. This will floor him."

But because you are trying to live by faith, and have been practicing this

delicate art for a long time, because you are carrying that lantern of faith, you check yourself. You hold that lantern higher to get a better look at your neighbor who insulted you, and even that short pause is enough to set you straight. You see your neighbor as you are supposed to see him, in the light of faith, as someone you are commanded to love and forgive, because God said you must do so. You see, God's getting into this now, as He is supposed to do. God's ideas are getting into your head, and God's plan is flashing clearly before you. And because you have trained yourself to hear what God has to say, you hear faith telling you, "Be patient, respect him, be silent. A new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you. Bear with one another."

And in three seconds, your temper that wanted to flare up, your tongue that wanted to stab, and your arm that wanted to swing for a knockout, are under control, and you put that dirty dig back in your pocket, or better still, you throw it far behind you hoping that it will never be found by you again.

What helped you? God's grace and the lessons of faith you learned by repeating them over and over again. It is not easy. It may take many a rehearsal before you can play your part without forgetting the lines. But keep at it. Light that lantern of faith and carry it with you wherever you go. Let its light shine into the dark corners of life. Let its light shine on all the things of life.

Life! What is your attitude, your habitual opinion, appreciation, evaluation of life right now? How do you look at things ordinarily? Is it all just so many revolutions of a big wheel, or

do you try, at least now and then, to see God's hand in everything that happens? Are you just at home with the constant remembrance of God seeing us and watching all that happens, and keeping order in spite of all our efforts to make ourselves unhappy? Do you believe that in the least event the hand of God is present, directing all?

The famous scientist, Newton, they tell us, was sleeping under a tree one day and was struck by a falling apple. He saw in this occurrence an application of the law that the earth draws all things to itself. He was a scientist; he thought and lived science; his mind was trained that way. A man of faith would have seen the hand of God at work, preserving all things, keeping them from flying off into space. His mind would be trained that way. And we? Perhaps we would have grumbled because our sleep had been disturbed, if our minds were trained that way.

Look around you in the world. Do you see God reflected in His creatures as He planned that we should do?

During the French Revolution of 1793 one of the fierce leaders of that uproar said to a simple farmer: "We are going to tear down your towers and churches."

"That may be," replied the farmer, "but you can't tear down the stars. And while that beautiful book of the stars is open in the heavens, we shall teach our children to spell from it the name of God."

If you would look at the world through the eyes of faith, you, too, would see written everywhere the glorious name of God. Every tree and bird and flower and rock and cloud would remind you: "See how we give glory to God and fulfill our destiny of giving ourselves to Him. Come on, join us, and live your life for God."

If you would live by faith, what a difference there would be in your attitude not only toward life and toward the world but even toward the things of religion.

Consider the Blessed Sacrament. All of us think we have real faith, but we do not act our belief. St. Augustine says, "You say that you believe. Do what you say and it is faith." We talk about our faith and think about it, and we do very little, and so it isn't faith very much.

No man in his right mind will walk out of a twentieth story window. He cannot see the law of gravity, but he knows it works, he believes in it. More than that, he acts according to that law. He will not walk out of that window. That's faith. Only natural faith, but real faith, real conviction, and action based on that faith and conviction.

If we really believed with a living faith that Our Lord is in the tabernacle in the Blessed Sacrament, that the God of all heaven and earth comes to us humbly in Holy Communion to visit with us in the poor house of our soul, wouldn't our prayers before the tabernacle come like sparks of fire from our heart? Wouldn't our thanksgiving after and preparation for Holy Communion be perhaps simpler than they are now, so that we would make them just one unbroken act of adoration and love and gratitude expressed in the few words of St. Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"

Again, the light of faith shows us in its brilliance that prayer is not just a bit of breath, or a fleeting thought. Faith tells us that prayer is talking to God; lifting up our mind and will and heart to God. But how often we begin to pray and finish praying without really thinking of God at all, to say

nothing of putting ourselves consciously in His presence before we address Him by our prayer. By prayer we can reach around the world to help our loved ones, or anybody, wherever they may be. By prayer we can gain grace for sinners and for pagans; win strength and courage and endurance for the missionary far away and for all who are working for God and for souls. We can, by prayer, go down into purgatory and walk to the gate of heaven with souls in our hands. By prayer we can hold out our hands before the throne of God, and plead with Mary, our Mother, and with all the angels and saints. We can help each other by prayer when sometimes our blundering words or actions might increase the need or grief of others.

Faith does that for you. Faith lets you pray like that. Why don't we practice at it more and more? Slowly, deliberately. Lord, increase my faith! Lord, teach me how to pray.

What is the holy sacrifice of the Mass? Just a beautiful ceremony? Faith shining like a light upon the altar shows you a rough wooden cross, upon which hangs the wounded and bleeding body of our Redeemer, with the Precious Blood trickling down upon souls who have gathered around the altar.

When you have a toothache or some other little ill, do you make use of these things as an excuse for complaining, display of temper, impatience? Ah, if you had a living faith you would see in each of these little trials a sliver from the cross of Christ which turns to heavenly gold whatever it touches.

If you had faith, then never would your daily duties be just so many stones to fill your sack of worries. You would understand that each action conceals some jewel of merit which can be made to shine by sanctifying it

with a good intention.

You would understand that neglected prayers, fits of temper, little lies, unkindnesses, and all little sins are not simply trifles that can be brushed away. You would understand that these things are evil, eating into your soul, causing it to become diseased and staining it with ugly marks that will be washed away only by the blood of Christ or burned away by the fire of purgatory.

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Yes, we know all this. We understand it all. We believe it. We try to make our faith a living faith, to make it a part of our life. It would make a difference to us if our religion were taken away.

But to test yourself, ask yourself what it would mean to *you*. Would it make any difference to you if next Sunday there would be no Mass celebrated in any of our churches? Do you feel that you could get along without Holy Communion? Would you miss the loving arms of your Blessed Mother Mary? Would you be willing to face the eternal future if you could not have your sins forgiven in the sacrament of confession?

Yes, we know what our faith means. We believe it. We understand it. But sometimes in our human weakness, in the rush of daily life, in the monotony and over-abundance of our daily tasks, the knowledge of our faith becomes hazy, the memory of it fades away, faith becomes too much mixed up with human reason, and so it is that we must constantly come back to the fundamental steps to strengthen our faith and purify it. We must pray for an increase of faith, we must make acts of faith, we must become more and more familiar with the truths of faith by meditation, by thinking upon them, until faith becomes a part of our life.

# Pre-Marriage CLINIC

**Donald F. Miller**

## On Marrying Divorced Non-Catholics

**Problem:** At least a dozen correspondents have posed this problem in recent weeks, and though we have treated it often before, the answer obviously needs frequent re-statement: May a Catholic girl marry a Protestant man who has been married in his own Church, but is now divorced from his wife? If she could not marry him while he is still a Protestant, could she marry him if he became a Catholic?

**Solution:** The answer to this question is contained in a simple principle that no Catholic should ever have a doubt about: The marriage of two validly baptized Protestants before a minister or judge or other authorized person, is valid, indissoluble, sacramental and lasting till the death of one of the persons unless some extraordinary circumstance made it invalid according to the natural or divine law. Such extraordinary circumstances would be the fact that one of the persons was insane or drunk, or being forced into marriage by a third party, at the time of the wedding. Or the marriage would be invalid if one of them had been validly married before and had his partner still living. But apart from such and similar circumstances, the marriages of validly baptized Protestants are valid and unbreakable; not even the Catholic Church can dissolve them or make one of the persons free to marry again while his (or her) partner is still living.

And it makes no difference that the divorced Protestant is now eager to become a Catholic, nor even that he has already become a Catholic. He has already entered a Christian (though Protestant) marriage, and if the marriage was consummated, it binds until either one of the persons dies. If it can be proved that the marriage was never consummated, then, just as in the case of two Catholics, the Church can declare the person free to marry again because, though the bonds of marriage were spoken, they were never sealed.

The case is different with the marriage of non-Catholics who were never validly baptized as Christians. Here the Church can apply what is called the "Pauline privilege," outlined in St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians (chapter 7), by which she can dissolve a marriage of two pagans if one wants to become a Catholic and the other refuses to live in peaceful marriage with the convert. But this applies only to the unbaptized or invalidly baptized.

# One Jew One God One Religion

Some Jews have given up waiting for the Messiah of their ancient prophecies to come. Others are still waiting, but rather hopelessly. Here a convert Jew who is a Catholic priest speaks to his fellow-Jews about the Messiah they have missed.

*Arthur J. Klyber*

**A**BOUT the year 33 of the present era, in the city of Jerusalem, a great Jew accompanied by His disciples entered an up-stairs dining-room to celebrate the ancient rite of the Passover (the so-called "last supper") for the last time in His life. After they had finished the supper, this great Jewish Rabbi said to them: "It has been with an intense desire that I have longed to celebrate this Passover feast with you before I suffer and die for you."

Obedient Son of David that He was, He celebrated the Passover service with His disciples in accordance with all the prescriptions of Moses. When the supper was finished, and the four goblets of wine had been consumed by all present, the great Rabbi Jesus arose from His place, girded Himself with a towel and humbly washed the feet of the Twelve. He then resumed His place, and began to bid them farewell in words of affection and prayer the like of which had never before fallen from the lips of any man:

"Father," He prayed, ". . . This is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Your Ambassador Jesus the Messiah. . . . Holy Father (in heaven) keep them loyal to Your Name . . . may they be one as We are One. . . . I do not pray for them alone (the Apostles), but I pray also for

those who through their preaching shall believe in Me . . . Just as You, Father, are in Me and I in You; so they too are to be one in Us."

O Jew of Jews! enshrining in Your great heart and mind the teachings of the Eternal Father to the Jews of the ages; the teaching sung every day even now in millions of Jewish homes and synagogues: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord, Your God, the Lord is One." ("She-magh Yisroel, Adonai Elohenu, Adonai Echod.") It is a prayer that every Catholic could also sing without the slightest fear of offending his faith.

## LOVE IS ONE

This unity! How we poor mortals wrestle wittingly or not, for its blessings, as Jacob wrestled with the angel at Jabbok. But yea, how also we fight against that unity, shielding in our hearts the fissionable power that blows us in all directions: ignorance, stubbornness and hate. There are different kinds of unity; the one kind is cherished by selfishness, and the other fostered by generosity. The one emanates from the Spirit of the one God, but the other offends our nostrils with the stench of the evil spirit. Vain, futile, despairing and dissolute is the unity that has for its center of gravity anything except the great One Who is Love. Impossible is a unity and love that does not begin with and return to

the eternal Unity and Love—the one God (the "*Adonai Echod*.").

A man, of himself and by himself, cannot achieve this bond of union with God and his fellow-man. Possessing something more than a heart of flesh—that is, a soul likened to the image of Divine Unity, he demands instinctively an above-the-earth motive for the sacrifices printed on the price-tag of unity. He is little moved to action, feels only dubious consolation, and gets angry (if he is a thinker), when he is told in the clap-trap language of the university that he should be "concerned rather with mundane morality than with supramundane bliss;" or that "charity and virtue bring their own reward;" or that a man who is kind and charitable to his fellows will gain "the immortality of influence."

#### JEWISH ONENESS

We evaluate the unity, the love and the peace of any society in the way we evaluate a marriage. Does the marriage or the society rather resemble an embrace than a divorce-movement? Is its tendency gravitational, toward itself, or is it like the mushrooming tendency of an atomic explosion? The answer is that a marriage or a society is a unity or merely a bundle, according to *what* it seeks, and *how* it seeks it; and that society is only as *good* as the thing it seeks. Now it would seem that those who chase after unity and peace, but do so in the wrong way, will never catch up with it; but will in point of fact, be running away from it or just marking time like soldiers in ranks, making a lot of motion without progress.

Today we hear from Rabbis and other prominent Jews that the Jewish religion lacks unity and is poverty-stricken. Those who talk in this way are usually from the Reform or the Liberal groups among the Jews. One

Rabbi called Judaism "an empty book with a beautiful preface." Jewish writers have pointed out, whether with alarm or otherwise, that "throughout the world, the days of Rabbinic Judaism are numbered." Perhaps some were after all glad that Orthodox Judaism (Rabbinic Judaism) was rapidly on the wane; but without realizing that a tragedy was being acted out before their very eyes.

This unceasing and intentional march away from such God-given beliefs as still remain in Rabbinic (Orthodox) Judaism engenders division and not unification; an explosion and not a setting like newly poured concrete. Many profess today a Judaism so spiritually anemic and lifeless that it might just as well be called by a different name. They worship when and as they please, if they worship at all. A large number of them have made philanthropy their religion; very many, too, have embraced Christian Science because, after all, it isn't really Christian; and many others have adopted a so-called "Jewish Science" which imitates the "Christian" Science.

Distressingly often we meet with skeptics among Jews, and a number of them talk about God as though He had at long last been outmoded and found to be an unnecessary "idea." Certainly, not all is right (to understate it) when, not too many years ago, the most prominent Rabbi of New York City was able to boast from his pulpit that no Jewish authority could excommunicate him if he were to deny the divinity of the Books of Moses. What a sad and devastating admission of disunity that was! Was this lamentable, cancerous condition of "modern" Judaism responsible for the unwarranted cry of some fiery New York Jews that "earthquakes, wars,

and (even) anti-semitism were to be laid at the door of Jewish Godlessness?"

Are we constrained sadly to repeat the clamor of Hosea, the Prophet: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel! The Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land because there is no truth, no mercy, no knowledge of God in the land. Swearing and lying and murdering and stealing and committing adultery. . . . Seeing that you have forgotten the Law of your God, I will also forget your children. . . . My God will cast them away and they shall be wanderers among the nations. . . . Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God . . . and say to Him: Forgive all iniquity." It is necessary for every back-sliding son of Israel to return to his God in repentance.. They must all try to be genuine Jews again if they expect to have even a crumb of peace for themselves, and unity with others.

#### WHAT IS A DEVOUT JEW?

Perhaps some of my Jewish readers have heard those words of Ludwig Lewisohn: "To be a Jew is your only debt to the world." Well, that message scintillates, but it could blind you by its brilliance. Just as there are Catholics and Catholics, so there are Jews and Jews, good ones and bad ones. Lewisohn would have been more correct had he written: "To be a *devout* Jew is your only debt to the world."

As I understand the devout Jew, he must first of all possess prophecies; for, *a Jew without prophecies is like a Christian without a Christ*; the one is not a Christian, and the other is not a Jew. Orthodox Jews would be the first to tell you that the *religion of Juda is essentially a religion of expectation*, a religion that is awaiting something. At the present moment in history (as in the past) Judaism con-

sidered in itself might be called a *question unanswered, a law unrelieved, a promise unfulfilled, a symphony unfinished*.

Moreover, this expectation of the devout Jew simply must mean a hope in the coming of a Redeemer who is a *Person*. Now, the most up-to-date and terribly devastating sin of millions (actually) of "modern" Jews (not the Orthodox) is their *unwarranted, arbitrary changing of the prophecy of a personal Messiah into an era or an epoch* which they have chosen to baptize "the Messianic era." This I say is devastating because it is a betrayal of the religion of Juda as revealed by the God of our Fathers; and, because such betrayal settles on a large segment of Israel a veritable curse. *Such Jews cannot be in any way classed with those who are devout Jews.*

#### AN OMELET WITHOUT EGGS

Let your good wife try to fry such an omelet; and then you try to eat it. As you must have eggs before you can have an omelet, you must have a Messiah before you can have a Messianic era. If the eggs are bad you will have a bad omelet; if good, then a good omelet. What really sensible Jew cannot see that an *era* or an *epoch* can be only as good or as bad as the people are who live in it? But what is going to make those people good? What ever led Jews into such a fallacy, except it was that they had lapsed from the faith of their Fathers, but still craved their Messiah?

A Messianic era without a Messiah could no more redeem a people or the world than a man could lift himself off the ground by pulling at his ears. Jude, the fourth Son of Jacob, from whom all Jews get their present title, was first a patriarch, and then a tribe; but despite the fact that Lot's daughter was changed into a pillar of salt,

*Juda was never changed into a part of the calendar*, into an era. Every informed Jew realizes the truth of this; and he also knows these words of the exceptional Rabbi, philosopher and doctor, Moses Ben Maimon of the 12th century: "Whoever does not believe in *Him* (the personal Messiah) is a meschumad (an apostate, excommunicated)."

Will our good Jewish people discover peace and unity in good-will meetings and in brotherhood weeks? Will they find that peace hidden away in indignation meetings? Will the search be aided by raising one's blood pressure on account of a dictator-persecutor? Will self-pity help them, or the dream of an utopian Jewish kingdom with the joys of the garden of Eden and more? I do not think so. I hold that my people will find their peace in the place and in the manner which God has destined — only when they *search diligently* for Him to whom they open their doors on the night of the Passover, only when they have found the Prince of Peace whom they have already given to the world.

#### THIS DEVOUT JEW

Is the devout Jew who believes in the coming of a Person-Messiah to be found anywhere? Yes; thank God his tribe is numerous. Maybe you will find one or the other in a *Temple* congregation (Reform), but you will surely find most of them in the synagogues of the Orthodox. Such Jews may be hidden away in a Ghetto; they are often dubbed "kikes" even by their own more wealthy but definitely less-religious fellow-Jews. This devout Jew is perhaps a man with stooped shoulders, heavy beard, and a countenance that seems to speak to you from centuries back. His children are round about him like olive-plants. Like you and me he has faults, is perhaps un-

couth, and uses his hands semaphorically when talking. Regularly he eats *gefulltefish*, herring and hallah-good food indeed. If any Jew has the old religion in his "bones," most likely it is he of Rivington St., New York City, or Maxwell, in Chicago, with his prayer-shawl, his phylacteries and his *Talmud*.

Well, it is sons of Abraham like these who believe that the Messiah is indeed to be a person, although not with the understanding that Catholics have. To them the Messiah is still to be the Son of David, a conquering King Who will restore the Kingdom of Israel. They believe too that when He has accomplished the restoration, all the nations of the world shall be brought to the knowledge and worship of the One God (*Adonai Echod*). He will not, however, be a dictator, they say, for in that Messianic government all men will have everlasting peace and unity. This Messiah, they further state, will not be God, but will be a remarkable man and prophet with some particular power from God (a kind of superman).

As a consequence of this teaching, against which Jesus had to contend even in the Apostles, the hopes of the Jews in the past have leaped from the depths of despair to the heights of heaven according as some sham messiah appeared and disappeared like a meteor flashing momentarily in the night sky. The Rabbis of old disagreed not a little as to the coming of this Messiah who was to set up the Kingdom of David once more. Once when one of them asserted that Bar Cochba, the Leader of the Jews in the war with Hadrian, was the Messiah, a fellow-Rabbi of apparently equal authority retorted, "Grass will grow on your chin before the Messiah comes."

All who have ever claimed to be the Messiah have gone down into the grave

and into dust; their lives were *taken* from them. But Jesus of Nazareth *laid down* His life, and alone out of all of them, laughed at the sepulchre by *taking up* His life again, as even Jewish history testifies. Moreover, the making known of the one True God to the *goyim* (gentiles), a privilege which the Jews say will be theirs in the Messianic Kingdom, has already been accomplished with honor by the twelve Jewish Apostles of Jesus of Nazareth and their successors. How is it, we may rightly ask, that about a dozen Jewish fishermen, preaching Jesus as the Messiah, were able to achieve what the several Jewish generals, Jewish philosophers, and sham-messiahs could not do?

And now that "*Adonai Echod*" IS worshipped by all nations, and all na-

tions have also acknowledged Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, what work of God remains for Jews to do? Is it not correct to point to the world-wide worship of the true God as an *unmistakable sign* that the long-awaited Messiah has already arrived? Alas, the sentiment expressed by a Chicago Orthodox Jew seems painfully correct. For, when he was asked by his son "Will the Messiah come soon?", he replied in a despairing voice: "Will he come soon, you ask? If he hasn't come already he will never come; it's too long; if he had been coming on crutches he would have arrived long ago."

(The second part of this article by Father Klyber, a Jewish convert, will appear in our March issue.)

## Problems of Professional People

### A Nurse's Problem

**Problem:** May a Catholic nurse engaged in public health service give advice on birth-control to non-Catholics, especially when they themselves request such information?

**Solution:** The giving of information is not in itself sinful, even if the information concerns some sinful action. Thus, when a police official tells the candidates for the police force the methods employed by criminals to open a safe, he is doing nothing wrong, for it is useful for these men to know how criminals perform their evil deeds, in order that they may prevent them from thus violating the law of God and of society.

But it is different if the information as to the way in which sins can be committed is given in circumstances which clearly indicate that the purpose of the one communicating the knowledge is to aid the other person to commit those sins. Thus, if a bank-clerk informed a criminal who happens to be his friend, of the best way to break open the safe in his bank, his communication of information would be equivalent to a recommendation to attempt the robbery. Such a mode of giving information is formal co-operation in the sin of the other and is always forbidden by God's law. Now this is the type of communication that takes place when a nurse informs a woman who seeks information on birth-control about the ways in which the act of contraception can be performed. She is equivalently advising this type of sin; hence, under no circumstances may a Catholic nurse act in this way, even though otherwise she will lose her job.

### The *Liguorian*

There may be cases in which the nurse sincerely believes that it is better for a woman not to have more children for the time being; and it is not wrong to communicate this information, since there are lawful modes of avoiding conception — abstinence and the rhythm — and the nurse can leave it to the woman's own conscience to choose one of these methods, in place of sinful contraception. If she believes that the questioner may be induced to adopt a lawful method of avoiding pregnancy instead of one that involves sin, she should suggest and explain such a lawful method.

The fact that the client is a non-Catholic does not modify the case. For the prohibition of contraception is a part of God's law, and accordingly is binding on all human beings without exception. It is not a merely ecclesiastical ruling, like the prohibition to eat meat on Friday, which binds only those subject to the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church. The Church may dispense a person from the law of Friday abstinence, or even abolish this law entirely; but the Church can never dispense a single individual from the law forbidding contraception, or modify this law with the passing of time.

And so, if a nurse engaged in public health service is requested by a non-Catholic client to advise her as to the various methods of contraception, the nurse must answer that her conscience does not allow her to give such information. If the client presses her for an explanation of her stand, the nurse should reply that contraception is forbidden by God's law, because it is a frustration of the principal effect of marital intercourse as intended by the Creator. She need not enter into an argument with the client; she should even judge this latter kindly, and believe that she is sincere in her conviction that contraception is not sinful. But the nurse herself must be faithful to her conscience as guided by the infallible teaching of the one true Church, and refuse to recommend what is sinful, whatever unfortunate consequences it may entail to herself. She must remember that sometimes a person must endure great hardships and sacrifice in the service of Jesus Christ.

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### *Parents Blush Who Spare The Brush*

Most folks boast about this fact:  
As children they were often whacked.

They think perhaps they have been gypped  
If by their folks they were not whipped.

So fathers, mothers, guardians too:  
Take this lesson home with you:

If you would win your children's thanks  
Be firm about the needed spanks.

LGM

# The Boys from Ballyhooly

Ballyhoo, as the name suggests, originated in Ireland. But there ought to be a new name for some of the forms it takes in America.

*Joseph Reynolds*

**T**HERE was this football match coming up between the Ballyhooly boys, representing County Cork, and the yellow-bellies from County Wexford. And the winner of that match was to take on the team from County Mayo, God help us!

Now you might have supposed there would be enough public interest in a program like that without any necessity for artificial stimulation. But that is where you would be wrong.

Living in the town of Ballyhooly at that time (which was many years ago) was an enterprising gentleman of leisure named Terence O'Shaughnessy, known to his intimates as "Two-bob." Terence was a betting man, and he would bet two bob on anything you cared to name (provided the odds were right), and some things you wouldn't care to name either.

Now in this forthcoming football match, "Two-bob" figured the Ballyhooly boys for a sure winner. His estimate was based, of course, on loyalty to his native village, but more practically and fundamentally on a shrewd assessment of the team's brawn

and skill. Mr. O'Shaughnessy sensed the opportunity to better his earthly lot by getting down a few bets. In Ballyhooly itself, of course, he could find no one who would wager against the local favorites. "Two-bob" therefore transferred his operations to the enemy stronghold itself. He made a trip through County Wexford, stopping off at several of the chief centers of population, where he put in a casual appearance at the local bars.

In any such gathering of men the conversation was bound to come around to the coming football match, and when this happened, "Two-bob" would venture his opinion.

"Say, boys," he would say, "I'm just a visitor in these parts, but from what I hear your Wexford lads are in for a terrible whipping."

And amid a storm of indignant denials, he would manage to get down quite a few bets.

Or he might try a different tack. "I hear the Ballyhooly center-forward is an awful dirty player, and he has vowed to kick the be-jabbers out of your lads before the day is out."

Amid violent protests from the Wexford backers, again the shillings backing up their opinion of such dirty play would tinkle on the counter, to be covered by the shrewd Mr. O'Shaughnessy.

Now as to whether "Two-bob" O'Shaughnessy made a killing or himself eventually was killed as a result of this nefarious scheming, I am not in a position to say. I must confess indeed that I am not sure he ever existed.

I am sure, however, that there is such a town as Ballyhooly in County Cork, and from the name of that town sprang our word "ballyhoo." No

less an authority than Webster's Collegiate Dictionary assures me of that, and goes on to define "ballyhoo" as "noisy demonstration to attract attention; sensational writing and propaganda." Someone like O'Shaughnessy must have done something special in the way of press-agency to give such fame to his native village.

But O'Shaughnessy, if he existed, was a piker. His American counterparts have left him far behind in the fine art of ballyhoo, whether you consider the field of sports or the intriguing world of the silverscreen.

You pick up the sport-page and you read an account of how Yukon Yussuf, the Awesome Alaskan Bone-crusher, is scheduled to wrestle Muscles Maimonodes, the Mighty Mohammedian Camel-driver. According to the press reports, this is a rematch, and brother! between these two behemoths there is bad blood. Yukon Yussuf has promised to beat the Moslem strong man into a jelly and spread him evenly over the southwest ring post. Muscles, through an interpreter, allows that he will bend the bones of the pride of Alaska until his teeth chatter like Moorish castanets.

Maimonodes, who was born Joe Smith in Needles, Arizona, doesn't know a pair of castanets from a pair of ice-tongs. In actuality, he bears no ill will toward Yukon, nor has Yussuf (never closer to Alaska than Chicago) anything against him. Everything you read about them has been spun out of the fevered imagination of the press-agent. What you read about them, in short, is ballyhoo.

Now there is something refreshing, we submit, about the ballyhoo connected with sports. The public knows it is being kidded, and likes it. To read about a football backfield which re-

sembles the four horsemen of the Apocalypse is almost like reading poetry. There is a certain fascination in following the latest verbal exchange between Frank Lane of the White Sox and Casey Stengel of the Yankees, in which each accuses the other of incompetence, malfeasance, and in general of a debilitating influence on the national pastime. The principals in such stories, and the publicity men who try to get the stories before the public, are guilty at times of (let us say) gentle exaggeration. But their innocent desire, along with Koko in *The Mikado*, is only "to add verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing tale."

Such exaggeration, or ballyhoo in the better sense, is also a recognized part of the circus world. We would be disappointed without the fantastic chant of the ring-master, who introduces the next "deathdefying and daringly dangerous tight-rope performance which has won the applause of all the crowned heads of Europe." That's the kind of ballyhoo that we like.

When we come to the press-agency of the movie industry, however, we are up against something else again, and something which in some of its forms might bring a blush to the manly cheek of "Two-bob" O'Shaughnessy himself. There are many good people in the movie industry, and doubtless there are good press-agents as well. To be publicized is a legitimate necessity for an entertainer who wishes to make a name for himself. It is the function of the press-agent to keep his client's name before the public by any means possible, so that more and more people will pay to see the movies in which his client appears,

and thus his client will be more and more in demand, and will command a larger and larger salary.

The press-agent who is most successful is the one who can plant his stories in such a way as to conceal his track, even though he was the prime mover in having the story printed.

The movie magazines, of course, literally crawl with evidences of press-agency. It is difficult to see how even the dewey-eyed movie addicts can continue to be deceived, as they read the accounts of how some bright young star was discovered by the interviewer, on an informal call, to be busy (imagine!) with ordinary household tasks. "Just a home-body at heart," is the conclusion of the interviewer, and if the readers of such stuff can't see the traces of the press-agent, they are indeed moon-struck and movie-mad. One suspects that even the press-agents have a low opinion of such gullibility as being unworthy of their talents.

To get his client's name into a movie magazine is routine work. A far greater triumph is scored by the press-agent who succeeds in getting his client's name into a news dispatch where it will attract attention without having the appearance of being an advertisement.

As an example of how this is done, consider the following. The United Press sent out a dispatch and accompanying picture recently to its member newspapers which purported to be an independent comment on the progress of a movie currently being made in Hollywood on the life of Lady Godiva, legendary character who is said to have ridden in the nude on horseback through the streets of Coventry in England. Maureen O'Hara plays the leading role, and beneath a

carefully posed picture of Miss O'Hara in her role (sufficiently draped to pass before the general public) the following caption appears:

"She will perform the famous unclad ride before the cameras in the forthcoming film. . . . To cut the number of unscheduled Peeping Toms down to a minimum, all surplus studio personnel, producers, electricians, and all will be barred from the set. Only 14 technicians, 11 of them women, will be on hand while the scene is filmed."

Behold here an instance of ballyhoo in one of its less inviting forms. Behold the triumph of the unscrupulous press agent, who at one stroke has 1) gotten Miss O'Hara's picture before the general public; 2) dispensed a few lines of advance publicity for her forthcoming film; 3) seasoned the account with a teasing suggestion of sex so as to draw the public past the box office in the hope of seeing such a presumably daring exhibition.

Now it may be that this will be a perfectly respectable film, just as Lady Godiva was a perfectly respectable lady. The unscrupulous press-agent, touching even what is good and respectable, can, like a snail crawling over a window, leave a slimy track. Such a press agent is interested in only one thing: get the public interested in your product, by fair means or foul, but get them interested.

Some press-agents are in the direct employment of stars or studios; others work indirectly on their behalf. In this latter group are the movie gossip columnists: Louella Parsons, Hedda Hopper and others. Although the stars do not pay them, they depend on them for precious publicity, just as the columnists depend on the stars to furnish a constant stream of gossipy items of information.

## The *Liguorian*

Much of the Parsons or Hopper chit-chat is inconsequential and harmless enough in itself (apart from the fact that it represents a monumental waste of time upon trivialities). But occasionally they turn out a batch of bad-smelling ballyhoo like the following sample, clipped from one of the daily papers. The oracle in this case is Miss Parsons, and she is recording an interview with Joanne Dru, in which she makes the following inquiry:

"Tell me something, Joanne. You and Errol Flynn have a great deal in common. He was married to Nora Haymes, who followed you in Dick Haymes's life. She was his third wife. Did you and Errol discuss Nora?"

This, we say, is bad-smelling ballyhoo. It presents the idea of casual divorce and remarriage (practically a way of life with some of the stars) as if it were a natural and normal thing, a thing to be taken for granted, and not open to any criticism. But to create such an impression is to give scandal

in the original sense of the word.

Our conclusion on the general subject would be this: A certain amount of ballyhoo is to be expected in life, and may readily be condoned. There is a place in the world for the boys from Ballyhooly, even though to their ballyhoo they add a touch of blarney as well.

But we have no admiration for the type of ballyhoo which holds nothing to be sacred in the exploitation of its subject; which has no sense of public responsibility, but asks only the question: how can I keep my subject before the public eye?

God alone knows how much harm is caused by ballyhoo practitioners such as these. One cannot but suppose that our Saviour had such as these in mind when He said:

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it were better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

### **"Hoppy"**

We pass on the dismaying experience of a priest, who, walking along the street, was loudly hailed by a group of small children playing on a porch. He was rather gratified by the noisy greetings, until he realized what the small fry were saying. It was, "Hello, Hoppy" or "Hi, Hoppy." This utterly mystified him for a few moments. But then he got it. He was dressed all in black, with a touch of white in his collar and his straw hat. Who dresses all in black, with a touch of white? Hop-along Cassidy, of course. So that is what the priestly garb means to children brought up on television!

*Selected*

### **For Teachers**

Don't get discouraged over the dumb students. Remember, we get our satisfaction out of the bright ones; we get our bread and butter from the mediocre ones, and we save our souls through the dumb ones.

*Notre Dame Religious Bulletin*

### **All Things From All Men**

Socialism is that kind of economic system under which the State imposes a heavy tax on all God-given teeth in order to supply everyone with state-given teeth, whether they are needed or not—and then rations everything that can be chewed.

*Bishop Sheen*



# readers retort

In which readers are invited to express their minds on articles and opinions published in *The Liguorian*. Letters must be signed and full address of the writer must be given, though city and name will be withheld from publication on request.

Mackinaw, Ill.

"May I respectfully suggest that you write an article on 'the honest employer'? Your articles seem to be tinged with these two ideas which I honestly believe do not represent the facts: 1) There are some honest employers, but most of them are not honest; 2) there are some dishonest unions, but most of them are not dishonest. I would say that there are more honest employers AND unions than dishonest. You seem to stress the 'few honest employers.' Where would the employee be without the employer who has headaches, yes, as many and more than the manager of a good Catholic magazine like yours? God love you.

P.B."

*Let us put into the record this statement: We agree with our correspondent that there are more honest employers and honest unions than dishonest. But certain anti-union spokesmen for employers and anti-union organizations are so raucous and uncompromising in their opposition to unions that a defender of the right of labor to organize may sometimes sound more anti-employer than he actually is in answering them. Our position on the many good employers in the country is outlined in a ten-cent booklet entitled "Mistakes Made by Unions and Employers," published by The Liguorian Pamphlet Office, Liguori, Mo.*

The editors

Brooklyn, N.Y.

"I am a new subscriber and have read

only two issues of THE LIGUORIAN but have already derived many benefits from it. I was rather provoked with the person in Syosset, L.I., who cancelled his subscription because of your stand on labor matters. Articles on labor take up very little space in your magazine, while those that have a bearing on our every day living play a much more important part. The thought occurred to me that perhaps too many truths are presented showing such persons how wrongly they are living, so they take cover from facing the truth by using a labor article as a reason for cancelling their subscription. I am an executive board member of a union, and my contention is that every single crooked union leader in the country can be blamed on the thousands of union members who won't take the trouble to attend union meetings and see that things are run properly. Their disinterest is very discouraging to the many good union leaders who are trying to improve their lot. Nothing bad can be forced on a group of union members if they are present at a meeting to fight for what is good, provided, of course, that they use their eloquence at the union meeting and not merely to sound off on how rotten their union is at a nearby bar or grill after the meeting is over.

A.V.Mc."

*It is a scandal that rarely more than fifty per cent of the eligible voters in America vote in state and national elections. It is a greater scandal that less than twenty per cent of the members of most unions*

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*take interest enough to attend meetings and to vote on issues that affect them and the country.*

The editors

Walnut Creek, Calif.

"My husband and I want to thank you for your article on the right to work laws. It hit the nail on the head. It was equally interesting to read the comments of some of your readers. Maybe if they had a real taste of their freedom to bargain individually with an employer, it would prove a rude awakening. My husband is a very minor official in the Railroad Brotherhood and has done some organizing. It is often a hard and thankless task. Most of the members seem to be indifferent, seldom attend meetings, often fail to vote in secret ballots, but frequently gripe about the lack of democracy in the union and come running for help when they get into trouble. Many a man owes the fact that he has a job at all to his union. No union is perfect, some are corrupt, but the indifferent and the apathetic members must bear their share of responsibility for the kind of union they have. They always accept the raises and the benefits, but can't be bothered to support the union in an active way. . . . I look for your magazine every month. You print the truth, even though at times it is hard to take.

Mrs. C.A.L."

*Again the old story. We hope its repetition will arouse some of the individuals who have done nothing but complain about their union.*

The editors

Brooklyn, N.Y.

"This is a reply to Miss H.T.C., who in one of your issues said that she would rather be married to an ape than a Negro. I'm happy her letter did not go into the waste-basket; if it had, I would not have had this opportunity. First of all, I would like to thank her for differentiating between Negroes and apes. I would also like to give

her some idea of marriage to a Negro. My husband and I (both Negroes) will be married five years this coming April. During our married life we've had the usual ups and downs, including five miscarriages. I don't know what an ape would have done, but throughout these severely emotional experiences my husband has been faithful, kind and loving. My illnesses have entailed much abstinence on his part. He never rebuked me or blamed me or said an unkind word, or even thought of extra-marital affairs. He waited on me day and night when I was ill. We used to think of separating because of these frustrating experiences, but that was because we were not practicing our Catholic religion. This, through the grace of God is no longer the case, and though the last miscarriage hurt us deeply, we had the comfort of God's presence. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God.' I quote that as background for the fact that I am now six and a half months pregnant, despite my hopeless past medical history. No specialist helped me; God heard our prayers, for it was after a retreat when we made our complete submission to God's will that it was found that our child still lived. I would like to say that a husband like mine cannot be pre-judged on his color alone. Rather I would say he is a treasure, no matter what his color. I pray to Our Lady, perfect virgin, wife and mother, to make me worthy of him. God bless you and your work.

Mrs. C.R.D."

*This intimate glimpse into the heart and home of a colored wife gives a dramatic answer to many who have been reared to think and speak of Negroes as something lower than human beings.*

The editors

Memphis, Tenn.

"I am subscribing to THE LIGUORIAN for one more year, but frankly we are quite burned up with your articles on Negroes. We are transplanted Yankees (here for fif-

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teen years) and through these years have appreciated the sincere and genuine efforts of the majority of the southerners to better the lot of Negroes in business, in education and in recreation. Please be patient with us, as our laws and customs go back many years. Changes should be gradual so that we may always have a peaceful community.

J.D.B. Jr."

*We do try to appreciate the practical problems that have to be faced by many in overcoming racial discrimination, especially where the patterns are ancient and deeply etched into community habits. We nevertheless feel that the ideals toward which a democratic and Christian society should strive need to be clearly defined and often re-stated. Only thus can progress be steady and sure, without backsliding into contentment with injustice and discrimination.*

The editors

Philadelphia, Pa.

"I take THE *LIGUORIAN*, but I would not be puerile enough to cancel it because I disagree with you for your stand on labor unions, Negroes, etc. I'm in favor of having all nationalities, religions and races circulate amongst their own exclusively, except for get-togethers when they are host and guest to each other. They can enjoy equal rights in their own distinct class. As for labor unions, the working folk would be better off without them, regardless of the better working conditions, which would have come about just the same, unions or no unions. Generally speaking, unions have helped non-competents and shirkers to hold positions at the expense of employers and capable workers. Moreover, why doesn't the Catholic Church pay a living wage to its employees — janitors, housemaids, etc.? Why do religious institutions take advantage of down-and-outers and just give them food, shelter and a few rags to wear?

C.N."

*There could never be a country like the*

*United States, melting pot of many peoples, if all nationalities, religious groups and races were forced or chose to live self-sufficiently by themselves. A common human nature must draw people together more than their national, cultural, religious and racial backgrounds set them apart, if there is to be anything like a Christian nation. As to unions, they may indeed at times unduly favor shirkers and incompetents, but that evil is vastly offset by the protection they give to the honest workingman. As to employees of Catholic institutions, many are paid living wages, while some are not. We are as anxious as anybody to bring about the day when all of them are.*

The editors

Philadelphia, Pa.

"I am a former seminarian. From my training I venture to say that I am informed in Catholic matters to a greater extent than is the average layman. But I now live 'in the world' and I think I have a fair insight into the opinions of both clergy and laity. I think THE *LIGUORIAN* is AAA-1. But, though you may say I have no right to criticize, I sincerely feel that your editorial policy in answering Readers Retorts is sometimes unfair and unjust. No one will back you up more than I will when you state that Christ's teachings must not be compromised. But it seems to me that you sometimes confuse doctrine with opinions. Why don't you realize that just as you know more about St. Thomas and Latin than any layman, a union member usually knows more about unions than a priest, and a person who lives in a colored neighborhood knows more about a colored slum than a priest who lives in a monastery? I am not trying to say that you are wrong in condemning prejudice, or in hoping and trusting in labor unions. We cannot make a universal statement that all union leaders are corrupt because a great number are, or that all colored people are dirty and dangerous

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because so very many of them are. But the people who write to you from their own personal experience in these matters have a right to their opinion. You won't convince them that they are wrong with insults, but only with logic and facts.

J.J.W."

*We wish this mentor had included a few explicit examples of our use of insults, or of our confusing the teachings of Christ with our personal opinions. Then we could answer more intelligently. When writing either on the evil of racial prejudice, or the right of workingmen to organize and bargain collectively, we stick pretty close to principles, and try to state specifically when we are giving opinions. The principles have to be applied in practice by all Christians, not changed to fit the opinions or practices of people "in the world."*

The editors

Oak Park, Ill.

"If possible I would like a little information in reference to the article in the November issue under the heading, 'Problems of Professional People.' I could not swallow the statement, 'for sufficiently grave reasons one may cooperate materially toward the sin of another.' I thought never could one cooperate toward sin. Evidently the word 'materially' carries some special weight in this statement which I haven't understood, and I would appreciate an explanation or qualification of the remark.

P.B."

*For clarity in deciding involved cases, moral theologians distinguish between formal and material cooperation in the sin of another. One cooperates formally with the sin of another when he joins with him both in the intention of sinning and the sinful action. One cooperates materially with the sin of another when he has no intention of sinning himself but does something or provides something that in some way helps another to commit a sin. Formal cooperation in the sin of another is never permissi-*

*ble. Material cooperation in another's sin is also forbidden by the moral law, except in cases in which there is a proportionately grave reason for placing an action that another may use for his sin but on condition that the action of the cooperator is in no way sinful itself. For example: a postman may be a cooperator in an illicit love affair of two people by delivering their letters. But delivering mail is not a sinful action in itself, and he would lose his job if he did not deliver the mail entrusted to him. He is a material cooperator, but he commits no sin himself.*

The editors

Minn.

"After reading and re-reading the article 'Charity is patient' by St. Alphonsus in THE *LIGUORIAN*, the question comes to my mind: Is one who is in love with God ever justified in avoiding pain, since it is so efficacious to endure it? Does the taking of aspirin for a headache, for example, lessen one's love for God? If it is better to suffer, why go to a doctor to be cured of the cause? Or is it that God just wants us to endure patiently the suffering that cannot be avoided? I don't believe I am abnormally afraid of pain. I gave birth to my ten children without any pain-killer. I am just trying to figure out how to put your article into practice. I am a convert and would willingly die as a martyr for the Catholic Church but only if I could not avoid it. Is it not best that the Church hides in persecuted countries and survives as best she can to continue her work? Isn't it the same with pain, if we try to get rid of it in order to carry on our work?

Mrs. A.J.S."

*It is not only not wrong to seek to rid oneself of pain, but it would be contrary to the fifth commandment not to use such remedies for bodily illness as would prolong one's life and make one more capable of rightly fulfilling the duties of one's state in life. When the saints speak of accepting pain for the love of God, they mean such*

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*pain as cannot be remedied by natural means. Each of us will be given plenty of such before we die. In the same sense, Catholics, in times of persecution, should use all prudent and sensible means to avoid martyrdom, only being ready to suffer and die for their faith if need be.*

The editors

Washington, Mo.

"I just read your article in the December LIGUORIAN, 'No Room in the Inn,' in which you speak of parents being refused rentals because they have small children. I am a father of four children myself, and fortunately have never rented. But I do know how destructive and careless most children are and how irresponsible are their parents. I know of homes vacated by families with children and left in a horrible state. I think it is due to 'parental delinquency.' Personally, if I had property to rent, I think I would rent to families with children. However, I would not blame anyone who would take the opposite stand in order to preserve their property.

D.H."

*Truly there are delinquent parents who permit their children free rein in defacing and destroying property. But not all parents are in this class. It is true too that the best of children, under the firmest supervision, will be harder on an apartment or a house than a childless couple. The moral question is whether this fact justifies the many, many property owners, in large cities especially, from excluding children. We think not. Those that do should be made to list their housing units as "homes for the aged."*

The editors

New York, N.Y.

"Since I first encountered THE LIGUORIAN, I have yet to read anything that could equal its style or content. All too seldom, in this materialistic world of ours, does one find a magazine that is both refreshing and

entertaining. Among the many publications on newsstands, it is difficult to find anything that is intellectually provocative and yet satisfying to the inner need for spiritual direction. It is my belief that THE LIGUORIAN is such a magazine and more. It is more, because it meets the layman halfway on the road to understanding, avoiding the pitfalls which many other well-intentioned magazines do not escape in expounding Catholicism. I have but one criticism (who doesn't?) and that is that the magazine is not publicized enough. Many of my acquaintances have never heard of THE LIGUORIAN nor know where to obtain it. It has the reading potentiality of an *Atlantic Monthly* and a *Readers Digest* combined. A greater advertising campaign could make it a greater asset than it is at this moment. I hope I shall be able to witness a wider distribution of the magazine and its continued success in providing the world with good literature.

R.V."

*We count greatly on such enthusiastic readers as this to make THE LIGUORIAN known in circles it has not yet reached. Catholic press month is a good time for talking it up to those whom it may help, and for giving subscriptions as gifts to reading friends.*

The editors

Lynchburg, Va.

"I would like to say to you that your wonderful magazine has been an inspiration to me and, I'm sure, to many other thousands. It seems as though God has given you a special inspiration, if I may say so, because I find myself often stopping in the middle of a paragraph and meditating on a point you brought out in an article. My husband and I were converted during our courtship, and we are forever amazed at God's goodness to us.

Mrs. J. M. L."

# Thoughts for the Shut-In

*Leonard F. Hyland*

## Priest's Saturday

We call to the attention of our shut-in readers this month, and recommend highly that they adopt it, the devotion known as Priest's Saturday. By this devotion at a special time and in a special way they offer up their prayers and sufferings for the needs of the priesthood throughout the world.

Pope Pius XI, to whom the idea of Priest's Saturday was originally presented, declared himself heartily in favor of the idea, and gave it his special blessing. "God in heaven and I on earth," the Holy Father had said earlier, "We desire nothing more ardently than prayer and sacrifice for priests! Let us beg God that He may give us holy priests! If we have this, all else will follow, but if this be wanting, all else will avail nothing." It was indeed from the Pope's trend of thought, thus expressed, that the idea of the devotion first came.

Following is the method in which the devotion is usually practiced:

By a specific intention you make it a point to offer the Saturday after the first Friday of each month to our Saviour, through the hands of Mary, for the sanctification of all the priests and students for the priesthood throughout the whole world. This offering includes Mass, Holy Communion, and all the day's prayers, labors, sacrifices, joys and sorrows. If for the shut-in Mass and Communion are not possible on this particular day, at least by intention they will supply for the lack as far as they can.

This devotion is, of course, recommended to all, but to the sick and disabled, it seems to us, it should have a special appeal. In its practice they can find a clearly defined field of apostolic endeavor. There can be no doubt that from their combined prayers and patience in suffering God will be moved:

- 1) to raise up an increasing number of priests, so desperately needed for every type of priestly work in every part of the world;
- 2) to grant courage and strength to priests already in the work of the priesthood, that they may not fail and falter beneath their responsibilities and burdens;
- 3) to inspire all priests to that sanctity of life so necessary in working successfully for souls.

"Pray to the Lord of the harvest," Christ said to the people of His time, "that He send laborers into His vineyard." This devotion is a direct answer to the appeal which Christ still makes to the world today. And the mother of Christ, who requested the faithful to receive Holy Communion on the first Saturday of every month, will surely be doubly pleased if her children offer up these Communions and prayers for priests.

Further information on the Priest's Saturday devotion may be secured by writing to the Salvatorian Fathers, St. Nazianz, Wis., since it is they who have done most to publicize it throughout the world.

# Blind Eyes and Spittle

Christ uses an unusual ceremony in working one of His great miracles.

*Raymond J. Miller*

**I**N WORKING His miracles Our Lord was divinely original. Always something new, always something different is the technique He adopted; and never mere showmanship or ostentation. Divine originality combined with divine restraint is the constant pattern of His wonders.

An excellent example of this combination is the curing of the blind man of Bethsaida. For that miracle, described very briefly in St. Mark's ninth chapter, Jesus chose a technique never used on any other occasion. It is so very original and unexpected, as a matter of fact, that when the holy commentators on the Gospel come to try to give an explanation of it, they all seem to give up in despair: "We can only conjecture," is their common refrain.

Very well then; if all we can do is conjecture, in God's name let us go ahead and conjecture on what new reaches and depths of wonder in the personality of Christ are to be unearthed in this incident of the blind man of Bethsaida.

First, let us listen to St. Mark as he recites the facts of the case:

They (Our Lord and His disciples) came to Bethsaida.

And they brought Him a blind man, and begged Him to touch him.

And taking the blind man by the hand,

He led him out of the town.  
Then He spat upon his eyes, and laid His hands upon him.  
And He asked him if he saw anything.  
He looked around and said: I see men, as though they were trees walking.  
Upon that He laid His hands on his eyes again.  
Then his vision cleared, his sight was restored;  
and he saw everything clearly.  
And He sent him home, saying:  
Go home; and if you pass through the town, tell no one.

Originality, ingenuity, freedom of action; love of the simple, ignorant poor; mysterious injunctions and actions: the incident fairly sparkles with them all. Our Lord could have cured the man with a simple word of command, as He often did on other similar occasions. Instead, He did so in a way that involves half a dozen intriguing mysteries: the mystery of leaving town; the mystery of the strange gradualness of the cure; the mystery of contrast between this blind man's cure and that of his fellow blind man in Jerusalem; the homely mystery of the man's seeing "men, as though they were trees walking"; the mystery of the closing prohibition ("tell no one"); and strangest of all, the mystery of the spittle of Jesus Christ.

First, the mystery of leaving town.

Why did Our Lord take the blind man beyond the city limits before He cured him? Why the secrecy? Was He afraid, or what?

He was not afraid, but *angry*: that is the answer. His old friends, the Pharisees, had been on His trail again. Just that morning, on the other side of the lake, a group of them had descended upon Him with a most extraordinary demand. As though they had the right to do so (and as though they had no civilized manners whatsoever) they arrogantly commanded Him to give them "a sign from heaven" on the very spot.

In other words, they were demanding to see His credentials as a teacher and leader of the people. The demand, of course, was a pose of hypocritical superiority; they seemed to wish to pose as heavenly customs officials, brusquely ordering Jesus Christ, the foreigner and interloper, to show His passport. And the "passport" would be the performance of some spectacular heavenly prodigy. On their demand, Christ was to jump and run like a traveling magician and produce fireworks in the sky for their satisfaction.

The whole thing reeked with malice and hypocrisy.

It was hypocrisy to imply that Our Lord had not yet produced His credentials as teacher and leader of the people. He had done so, working miracles in the very presence of the Pharisees, again and again. Hypocrisy it was also to give the impression that they were willing to believe, once Jesus gave them "a sign." Then there was hypocrisy in the demand for a spectacular kind of "sign from heaven," as though fireworks in the sky could cover over their own evil lives. And hypocrisy above all in their arrogant assumption of superiority and of the right to question Jesus Christ.

What was Our Lord's reply?

A sinful and adulterous generation wants a sign!

He cries in anger; turns His back upon them, and although He had just arrived in the place, He gets back in the boat with His apostles and returns to the other side of the Lake of Genesareth. On the way, He urgently cautions the Twelve to be on their guard against the *hypocrisy* of the Pharisees and Sadducees, as though the thought of that hypocrisy were filling His mind just at that time.

Arrived on the other side of the lake, and entering the little town of Bethsaida, He has His encounter with the blind man. Some friends lead the man to Him; it is the friends, not himself, who ask for the cure. Even though Jesus is still angered by the hypocritical demand of the Pharisees for a spectacular sign from heaven, He feels Himself touched with compassion by the misery of this poor pagan. At the moment, He is opposed to anything spectacular; but the man must be helped. So Jesus takes him by the hand, and quietly leads him away from the crowd, away from the town. If He is to work a miracle, this time there will be no opportunity for men to gape and stare, as at fireworks in the sky.

But that brings up the second mystery in the case: why the gradualness of the cure, and why the elaborate and peculiar ceremonies?

Because there was a need for *faith* before the miracle could be performed; and the man lacked the needed faith. Moreover, Christ wanted to make it gradual as thereby being less of a "sign from heaven" such as the Pharisees had angered Him by demanding earlier that day.

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It is a fact that in His general Providence, God does demand faith before He works miracles. In some mysterious way, He has chosen to let even His almighty miraculous power be dependent upon, or conditioned by, the faith of His creatures.

The Gospel itself tells us so. Once when Christ came to visit His home town of Nazareth, the Gospel states:

He could not work many miracles there because of their unbelief.

Another time, when the Apostles asked Him why they had been unsuccessful in trying to drive out a devil from a possessed boy, He replied:

Because of your unbelief.

On the other hand, He often worked His miracles with words to this effect:

According to your faith, be it done unto you.

He said to one man who came begging for a favor:

If you can believe, all things are possible to them that believe.

And He urged the importance of faith on all His followers:

Have the faith of God.

Amen, I say to you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain:

Be thou removed and cast into the sea; And shall not stagger in his heart, but believe whatsoever he says shall be done:

It shall be done unto him.

If, then, the cure of the blind man of Bethsaida is gradual, one obvious reason is because the faith of the blind

man himself is undergoing a gradual awakening. Christ was presiding at that awakening, watching it, guiding it along:

Do you see anything?

He asks the man half way through the cure, prodding, prompting, assisting him not only to earthly vision, but in the first place to the inward vision of faith.

In regard to the mystery of the contrast between the curings of Bethsaida and Jerusalem, the doubt comes because at the outset Our Lord seems to have demanded no faith whatever from St. Restitutus (as we have called the man of Jerusalem), and to have cured him completely almost before he knew what was going on.

But the answer to the doubt is that St. Restitutus was a very special, an exceptional case. He had been chosen by God to be Christ's witness; this was the very reason why he had been born blind:

Neither this man has sinned (Christ told the apostles) nor his parents; but that the works of God may be made manifest in him.

In other words, in the case of St. Restitutus, it is Almighty God Who is taking over, for His own purposes, from start to finish.

The next mystery, of the blind man's seeing "men, as though they were trees walking," gives the case a kind of homely, simple touch, in the very midst of supernatural wonders. It is the language of the very ignorant and the very poor, who find difficulty in expressing themselves except in strange awkward ways. The "mystery" is how such a rustic and awkward way of talking could have found its way into

the sacred Gospel narrative.

The mystery here, however, is only superficial. If it is the language of the poor, it is exactly what we are to expect in the company of Jesus Christ, Who loved and favored the poor. Especially at this time, after His experience with the Pharisees and their high-flown ideas of a sign from heaven, He would have been all the more willing to listen to the halting but sincere language of the poor.

The "closing prohibition" was in Jesus's words:

Go home: and if you pass through the town, tell no one.

The mystery here lies in the obvious impossibility of keeping a thing like this cure secret for very long.

But the answer to the difficulty may be found just there. It would not be "for very long" that Our Lord Himself was to remain in that locality. Hence what the closing prohibition really means is this: Say nothing about this until I am safely on My way. He still did not want to give the people any occasion for spectacular demonstrations or any favoring of the idea of "a sign from heaven."

But there is also another reason. Bethsaida was in pagan country, and Our Lord's general rule was not to work miracles for pagans.

I was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel

He had said only a short time before. Occasionally He did make exceptions to the rule. This was one such exception; and as an exception He wished to keep it quiet.

And incidentally it is a wonderful thing to see Christ making exceptions to these general rules. It shows Him

in new light as Lord and Master of His own rules and laws. As Man, He was bound by the law; as God, He could dispense or make exceptions as He pleased.

We have saved for the last the strangest mystery of all: the mystery of the spittle of Christ.

It grates on our delicate sensibilities. It is not the kind of thing we like to see Christ the King doing. That is the first mystery about it.

Of course this is a very snobbish viewpoint. Indeed, the Pharisees would have thought just the same about the matter. And so we do not take ourselves too seriously on this point, but simply pray for humility and good sense to see things in God's way, not man's.

But there is another mystery here which it is not so easy to dispose of. What possible relationship can there be between human spittle and the cure of blindness?

Some unbelieving writers, intent on explaining away all the miracles of Christ, have declared that there is such a connection; and they quote some ancient Jewish almanacs (at least they are the kind of books full of folklore that would be called "almanacs" to-day) as laying it down: "The spittle of a man (not a woman) who is fasting, is good for eye trouble."

Modern science, however, knows of no such curative value in human spittle. And the writer is reminded of an experience of his own as a small boy. Once in a crowded street car he found himself standing exactly in front of a man wearing black glasses and adorned with a flowing dark beard. The sight would have been a striking one anywhere, but it is easy to imagine how it fascinated a small boy staring up at it only two feet away. And while he was staring, he heard what seemed to

be an old friend of the bearded one greet him with amazement, and demand with exclamations of wonder: "Why the whiskers?" To which the whiskers replied: "I had trouble with my eyes, was almost going blind. But then somebody told me to let my beard grow, and now I believe it really is helping me somehow."

It may be, of course, that there actually is some connection of a physical or medical kind between letting one's beard grow and relief for sore eyes. But like the ancient Jewish thing of "the spittle of a fasting man (not a woman)" at the very best it will bring some relief, but never an instantaneous and complete cure.

Our Lord cured the blind man of Bethsaida, however, with a complete and practically instantaneous cure. He was using no home remedy out of an ancient Jewish almanac; He was drawing upon His own divine power.

But what part did His spittle play in the cure? That is our question and our mystery now.

It is possible that it had only symbolical value, as a reference to some divine truth. The only trouble here is that none of the Saints or Doctors seem to be very clear on just which divine truth is symbolized by human spittle. And so this explanation does not explain very much.

It is possible also that Our Lord's own spittle, as distinct from that of ordinary human beings, did possess a special curative power; and that knowing of this by His supernatural infused knowledge, He did make use of this power of His own spittle, at least to begin the work of the miracle.

This would mean that for at least the beginning of the miracle there is a natural explanation. It is not completely natural; indeed, as we shall see, there is more of the supernatural than

the natural even about the use of the spittle; but for now let us suppose that it is a natural explanation.

Must we reject it for that reason?

On the contrary, we must give it every consideration. The policy of the Church in considering alleged miracles of the Saints or of Our Lady is to favor a natural explanation wherever possible. This is also the policy of commentators on the life of Christ regarding His own deeds: if a natural explanation is possible, do not conceal it, but bring it forward, study it, give it whatever weight it deserves.

Such (to give an example or two) is the case with Our Lord's mysterious "hiding Himself" from His enemies on several occasions; such is the case with the bringing of Peter's boat to land after Christ's walking upon the water.

Now it so happens that there is a special curative power which may be suggested for the spittle of Jesus Christ; something peculiarly His own, and yet something which can be measured in a way by modern medical science.

The basis for this suggestion is the fact that Our divine Lord was never ill for a moment in His life; and that He possessed a very special privilege or protection which made it impossible for Him to be ill.

Thus there might be at least a partial "natural" explanation of why Our divine Lord used the spittle in the cure of the blind man of Bethsaida. But even so, there still remains plenty of the supernatural in the event. Our Lord's possession of that kind of spittle was a supernatural fact to begin with. His knowledge of its power was infused and supernatural. And the very manner of His using it, with divine mercy and constraint, involves His super-natural personality.



## *For Wives and Husbands Only*

*Donald F. Miller*

### **Requirements for Baptismal Sponsors**

**Problem:** I am expecting my fourth child in a couple of months. I have already written to two of my relatives, who now live in a distant city but expect to move back here before my child will be born, asking them to be the new baby's sponsors in baptism. I had thought they were good Catholics, but I just recently learned from the mother of one of them that they have not made their Easter duty, nor do they go to Mass or receive the sacraments. Under those circumstances would it be right for me to have them as sponsors for the baby? If not, how can I get out of it now without hurting their feelings? What are the duties of baptismal sponsors these days?

**Solution:** The Canon Law of the Church requires that the sponsors of a child in baptism have the intention of assuming the office and the duties of a sponsor. It also defines the office of a sponsor as that of taking a "perpetual" spiritual interest in the one for whom he was sponsor, and endeavoring, as opportunity presents itself, to help that one carry out the solemn promises of baptism, which, in the case of a baby, are pronounced by the sponsor in its stead. Practically speaking, this means that a baptismal sponsor should pray especially for his spiritual child; keep in touch with the child as it grows to manhood by spiritual remembrances or gifts on anniversaries or feastdays; and be ready to utilize any opportunity for giving spiritual encouragement or help when it is needed.

Clearly, then, a non-practicing Catholic can have little capacity for or interest in doing even these simple little things that are included in the office of a sponsor. Therefore Catholic parents would defeat the very purpose of sponsorship if they invited lapsed Catholics to stand up for their children.

Sometimes, however, the occasion of a baptism can be used to bring slipping Catholics back to their duties. For example, in the case presented here, the mother should talk to the couple whom she has asked to be sponsors about what this office means, and why she wants only good Catholics as the sponsors of her children. This may be sufficient to bring them back to the sacraments and start them on the right path again. But if they show no interest in giving up their neglect of Mass and the sacraments, it should not be too difficult or painful to tell them why it would not be right for them to assume the sponsor's role.

# Happenings in Rome

Monthly round-up of significant events in the capital of Christendom.

*Christopher McEnniry*

## *Sicily's Weeping Madonna:*

Sicily has the faith. Sicily professes the faith. Even the Pope declared that, in the universal, world-wide plebescite of faith that was the Marian Year, the Sicilian celebration stood out for unanimity of people, splendor of rite and fervor of faith.

Fair Sicily! How often her very beauty has been her undoing! Her climate, her products, her magnetism, her unique position in the Mediterranean, between two continents, along the lines of international commerce, all have brought to her shores the invading armies of well-nigh every great power from the days of Cyrus and Alexander the Great, down to the United States forces of the last war. After every conquest she has risen to new strength and vigor. The strains of many peoples are in the blood of her sons. This may account for their mental acuteness. In the subtle art of jurisprudence the Sicilian is outstanding. Throughout continental Italy that is an axiom. Judge Medina and his many contemporaries proclaim it in the United States.

St. Paul landed in Sicily. The faith spread throughout the Island and from the Island to many parts of the world. The Saracens over-ran Sicily. Fiercely they destroyed or desecrated every Christian church. Two little shrines of the Madonna were somehow preserved and from them, after the long occupation, the saving truths of the true religion once more spread throughout the land. Today, said the Pope, popular shrines of God's Mother dot the Sicil-

ian mountains and valleys and fertile plains and sea-shores. In fact, he said, with the many beautiful titles, the people of Sicily could have a Litany of the Blessed Virgin all their own: Madonna of the Letter—Madonna of the Grotto—Madonna of the Stair—Madonna of the Heights—Madonna of the Grove—Madonna of the Hermitage—Madonna of Mercy—Madonna of Providence. . . .

Recently in a Sicilian village tears were seen to flow down the cheeks of a marble Madonna. The pious prayed. The practical pooh-poohed. The spectacle was repeated. More and more saw it. The Bishops of Sicily determined to get to the bottom of it. They invited police, lawyers and scientists to an investigation. The decision was that the fact is certain, and there is no possible natural explanation.

In his radio address to the Marian Congress in Sicily the Pope referred to this matter in a prudent but delicately sympathetic way. While, he said, the Holy See has as yet pronounced absolutely no decision, Our heart was thrilled to learn that the Sicilian Bishops had investigated and found the report authentic. Why should the Madonna weep? She is always full of love and pity for this unhappy human race to whom she was given as she stood weeping at the foot of the cross of her dying Son. Oh, the tears of the Madonna! On Golgotha they were tears of compassion for the tortures of Jesus—tears for the sins of the world. If she could be sad today in the glory of heaven, would she weep for the wounds in-

flicted today on the Mystical Body of Christ, on Holy Church? Would she weep for those misguided people, once children of Mother Church, who have renounced their loving Parent and gone over to the infernal enemy? You will dry her tears by living godly lives and by laboring to bring back to the fold your straying brothers.

At the end of his message of praise the Pope added a few words of pastoral advice. His poetical and tactful expressions may be summed up briefly: Say your prayers, study your catechism, go to Mass, receive the sacraments of Confession and Communion, and lead exemplary Christian lives.

**St. Augustine's Birthday:**

The Church usually celebrates the memory of her sainted heroes, not on the day they were born to this natural life with the stain of original sin on their souls, but on the day they passed to the glory and joy of supernatural life with God.

Nevertheless the Pope has just made an exception in favor of one of the greatest men in the history of the world — St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, North Africa, and Doctor of the Universal Church.

November 13, 354, just sixteen hundred years ago, Augustine was born. By sermons, letters and books, he turned all the power of his acute mind, devastating logic and invincible eloquence, to refuting error and to explaining and clarifying the true doctrines of revealed faith. The arguments Augustine used sixteen hundred years ago fit so perfectly the needs of today that the Pope felt he could not let this anniversary pass unnoticed.

In his letter to the Superiors General of the seven great religious orders following most closely the rule of St. Augustine, the Pope inserts many of the sparkling gems from the writings of the Saint: "Too late have I known Thee; too late have I loved Thee, O Beauty ever ancient and ever new." "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord; and our hearts will never rest until they rest in Thee."

**Spanish Workers:**

Their children and their childrens' children will hear the story of their pilgrimage to Rome and their audience with the great Pope Pius XII. They were representative of 200 different enterprises in Barcelona, Spain — from the cotton mills, the woolen mills, the metal works, the chemical works, the public transport system. . . .

"Workers of Barcelona, most dear sons," said the Pope, "Tomorrow when you are back in the plant, bending over your machines, feeling all the weight of daily fatigue to gain a livelihood for yourselves and your families — when you pause a moment to wipe the sweat from your brow, remember that your Father in Rome is beside you in spirit thinking of your welfare and wishing all that is best for your soul and body. Think of his words of fatherly advice: let Jesus (for He was a worker) be always your model, let prayer be your refuge, and the hope of heaven your solace in your sufferings. May the most holy Virgin Mary, especially during this Marian Year, gather you under her mantle and protect you from all evil . . . We bless you and your families and your labor unions.

People who live beyond their income should act their wage.

*Woodmen of the World*



## Pointed Paragraphs

### *Stop, Look and Read!*

You can take just about nine out of ten Americans, or, if you want to narrow your field, about three out of four Catholics, and, without fear of being contradicted, say to them:

"Listen, friend, you've been neglecting something. You've been caught up in the common American spirit of 'dash and go.' From morning to night you're running, at least metaphorically, after shadows. Your job, your parties, your movies, your television, your sports, your trips, keep you constantly occupied. You've been neglecting your mind and your soul.

"It's time to stop the rushing about, and the being pushed about by forces outside of you. It's time to assert your human dignity and the authority you have over your own life. It's time to start using your mind and to quit letting it stagnate and atrophy while you are tossed about like a leaf in a high wind.

"Stop — that means, give yourself some time for reflection and meditation. Stop dead in your tracks some time each day, for the purpose of thinking about God, about your soul, about heaven and hell. Stop in a church, if you can find solitude and silence nowhere else. There you will find God waiting for you.

"Look — that means, look about you for some stimulating reading that will induce self-examination, meditation, love of God and prayer. Look for a Catholic magazine that enlightens you, a spiritual book that inspires you, a life of a saint that teaches you and

encourages you.

"Then read, and while you read, listen for the suggestions and the inspirations of God. God won't help those who don't help themselves. God won't speak to those who are always listening to the voices of the world. If you read and think and listen to God's voice and ask Him for His help each day, your mind will come out of the shell the world has hardened around it, and it will give you complete command of your life and of your eternal destiny."

That's the idea behind Catholic Press Month. Don't let it fall on deaf ears or on a paralyzed mind.

### *"Sin Will Take Care of Us"*

A young married woman died recently. The notice of her death was in the newspapers. She died in the process of having an abortion. And her husband explained that she was getting rid of her baby because she had just been offered a small role in a movie.

Her small role in the movie turned into a big role before her everlasting judge—a role she would play for all eternity.

So many sins are like that. People think they have to commit a certain sin to obtain a certain future benefit. "We have to practice birth-prevention because we want to buy a new car next year, and we can't afford both a baby and a car." "We have to limit our family because we won't be able, fifteen years from now, to give a university education to more than a cou-

ple of children." "We have to have an abortion so that the wife can keep on working and making money and saving for our vacation in Europe."

All these future contingents! How absolutely dependent they are on God. True, God does not always take the sinner before he can carry out the plan based on his sin. But sometimes He does, as in the case of the woman whose abortion was going to fit her for a small movie role. And when He does, He is saying to all other calculating sinners:

"You are in my hands. You shall live only as long as I let you live; you shall carry out only such plans as I permit you to carry out. But what you have planned in sin, you shall repay in death!"

### *The Right to be Rich*

A reader who has called THE *Liguorian* editors ignorant, puerile and socialistic, because they have expressed opposition to right to work laws and loyalty to the ideal of living wages for all workers, has sent us a leaflet that goes all out in defense of an American's right to be rich.

Overlooking for the moment the severe warnings that Christ the Son of God uttered against the spiritual dangers of being rich, we can go along with the leaflet's main thesis that there is nothing wrong with a man's acquiring, through just means, more material goods than his average neighbors possess. Nor do we see any evidence that this so-called right to be rich is being seriously challenged in America. New ideas, new inventions, new processes, industriousness and self-sacrifice, combined with what can only be called good luck, are constantly being rewarded by bigger and better incomes.

But we do challenge the assumption

of the leaflet that any kind of social legislation or organized action that interferes with a man's chances of getting rich is *socialistic*.

As examples of socialistic interference with the acquiring of riches, the leaflet cites higher income taxes for the rich than for the poor, and the high taxes levied against inheritance. We have no doubt that the government's use of some of the taxes it collects for old-age pensions, unemployment relief, protection of workers' rights, etc., would be considered horrible examples of socialism by the same writer.

Worse still, and more deeply plunged into socialism, would be considered anyone who would argue for labor organizations, collective bargaining and living wages for all workers, because a man can't get rich as fast when a union is clamoring for living wages as when he pays what he pleases.

All this is nonsense. It is also dishonest, unChristian, and economically unsound. The right to get rich is defensible only in the framework of social justice, and social justice is a far cry from socialism.

Social justice demands that the immortal dignity of all workingmen be recognized. It imposes the obligation of upholding labor's right to organize, and of every workingman's right to a living wage. It charges the state with the duty of protecting its working citizens from exploitation, and of levying whatever taxes are necessary for carrying out its obligations according to ability to pay. Social justice grants the right of individuals to get rich, but not through the making or keeping of hundreds of other individuals poor and insecure.

### *Running Away May Be Essential*

In a recent issue of *American* monthly magazine there appeared

some interesting comments by Mr. Billy Graham touching on the revival of religion in our times. Mr. Graham, as everybody knows, is the celebrated and earnest exponent of what used to be called the "old time gospel religion;" his talks in all parts of our country and indeed of Europe have attracted thousands.

Mr. Graham had some shrewd observations to make on the current scene. We found one short paragraph of his article particularly significant because it revealed a rather surprising lack of information on the part of its writer. Here is the exact quotation:

"Time was when men of God hid themselves behind monastery walls and absented themselves from humanity's needs. But today there is a growing awareness on the part of Christian leaders and churches that Christ alone is the hope of the world."

Billy, we have news for you. Men are *still* hiding themselves behind monastery walls (even though we would not concede that this means they are "absenting themselves from humanity's needs.") Since World War II the influx of vocations into the very strict and cloistered Trappist life has been literally phenomenal. Half a dozen of these Trappist monasteries have sprung up since the war's end in various parts of the United States. And the Trappist life is only one form of the strict contemplative vocation. There are several other orders of men and women which are built essentially on continual prayer and retirement from the world.

Now Mr. Graham strikes us as a very sincere and dedicated young man, but he gives expression here to one of those half-truths upon which the whole structure of Protestantism is built.

It is indeed true, as he points out, that we need men and women who will

take an active role in bringing Christian leadership into the world. It is indeed true that Christ alone is the hope of the world, and we need men and women who will spend their lives very actively in making that fact known.

But this is only half the truth. We need men and women also who by their lives of total dedication to prayer will make up for those in the world who do not pray nearly enough, or not at all. We need men and women who by their lives of penance and self-denial will perhaps appease God for all the sins of selfishness and soft living by which men blind themselves to spiritual realities.

We hope therefore that Mr. Graham will permit us to amend his statement.

"In these times we should be intensely grateful that there are men and women of God who hide themselves behind monastery walls in order that they may provide for humanity's essential needs."

We hope that Mr. Graham will be brought to realize in time (as he will surely come to realize in eternity) that there is no more important work being done in this wide world than what is done behind those same monastery walls.

### *Prosperity*

We have been noting in the papers lately that in spite of the fact that there seems to be a minor recession in operation at the moment, the country in general is at a high point of prosperity.

The trains are comfortably filled, the shopping districts are crowded with housewives and husbands quite anxious to spend money, and almost every home from coast to coast has a garage appended to it or hovering near within which there is an automobile. Nor can one raise one's eyes to many roofs of

the nation's homes without beholding the television antennae pointing to the sky.

Prosperity can be dangerous. So the history of the past teaches. War leads to peace; peace to prosperity; prosperity to pride; pride to jealousy; jealousy to war; and war to peace. And so the cycle goes.

There must be some method short of war whereby this cycle can be broken, whereby peace can remain with us without leading eventually to war. There is. *It is the method of generosity.* Generosity can keep a prosperous people relatively poor, not abjectly poor, which condition breeds war also, but decently poor, so that one and one's family have enough for the necessities and the frugal luxuries of life but not so much as to cause one's neighbors to become jealous.

Generosity can be best exercised towards the poor peoples of other lands, half of whom go to bed hungry each night, and three quarters of whom are still in the darkness of paganism and religious error.

There are Catholic people who are

bitterly critical of foreign missionaries who mount the pulpit of parish churches on Sunday morning and plead for material help for the disinherited of the world. Outside the church is their fine car; a short distance away is their comfortable home, with its frigidaire, its television and radio, its automatic washer, its pantry filled with food. *They have never known the pangs of hunger; they have never known homelessness and malnutrition. Yet, they are unwilling to share with others the good things with which God has blessed them.*

Instead of using every means to keep foreign missionaries out of the pulpit, they should be happy that they have the opportunity of learning where the need is greatest and where their money will do the most good. They should not complain if they are asked to give to the poor of the world *every Sunday of the year instead of only on one or two or at most three Sundays.* Far better to keep themselves poor through generosity than to have poverty thrust upon them through war.

#### *Reason For Complaint*

Some flowers were sent to the president of a bank which had just moved into a new building. The president was not surprised to receive flowers on such an occasion, since he had received many similar gifts and congratulatory messages. But what did surprise him was the message on the card attached to this bouquet of flowers. It read: "With deepest sympathy."

While the president was wondering what kind of a greeting this might be, he received a telephone call from the florist. He told the president of the bank that he was sorry but he had sent him the wrong bouquet of flowers. The president replied: "Don't worry about it, that's all right, I am satisfied."

The florist, however, was not satisfied, for, as he said, "I'm not worrying about you. It's the other party. Your bouquet was sent by mistake to a funeral parlor. On your bouquet the card read: 'Congratulations on your new location."

*The Voice*



# Liguorian



## EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ST ALPHONSUS

*Selected and Edited by John P. Schaefer*

### THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

#### REMEDIES AGAINST TEPIDITY (Cont.)

The third means of becoming a saint is *mental prayer*. John Gerson writes: "He who does not meditate on the eternal truths cannot, without a miracle, lead the life of a Christian. This is because, without mental prayer, light fails us, and we walk in the dark. The truths of faith are not seen by the eyes of the body, but by the eyes of the mind. He who fails to meditate on them, fails to see them, and therefore walks in the dark. And being in the dark, he easily grows attached to sensible things, and for their sake comes to despise the eternal."

St. Bernard writes in the same vein: "Prayer regulates the affections, directs the actions." In other words, prayer keeps the affections of the soul in order and directs all our actions to God. But without prayer the affections become attached to the earth, the actions conform themselves to the affections, and everything is in disorder.

One who neglects to pray, therefore, will discontinue loving Jesus Christ. For prayer is the blessed furnace in which the fire of holy love is enkindled and kept alive. If the devil, then, finds a soul cold in divine love, he will have little difficulty in inducing it to partake of some poisonous fruit. "It is on this account," says St. Teresa, "that the devil labors so hard to withdraw souls from prayer, for he well knows that he has lost those who faithfully persevere in prayer."

We should not pray, however, mere-

ly to taste the sweetness of divine love. Whoever prays from such a motive will but lose his time, or at least derive little advantage from it. We should begin to pray solely to please God: that is, solely to learn what the will of God is in our regard and to beg of Him the help to put it into practice.

Oh, how great are the benefits that flow from prayer! In prayer we conceive holy thoughts, we practice devout affections, we excite great desires and form efficacious resolutions to give ourselves wholly to God. From the practice of prayer, too, it results that a person is constantly thinking of God.

Prayer, moreover, creates that desire of retiring into solitude to converse alone with God. We seek to maintain interior recollection even in the discharge of necessary external duties. I say *necessary* duties, such as the management of one's family, or the performance of duties required of us by obedience. For a person of prayer must love solitude and avoid the distractions of superfluous and useless affairs. Otherwise, he will lose the spirit of recollection, which is a great means of preserving union with God.

The greatest evil of all, however, is that without mental prayer we shall not pray at all. For he who neglects mental prayer sees very little into the wants of his soul. He knows little of the dangers to his salvation, of the means to be employed to overcome temptations. And so, understanding

little of the necessity of prayer, he discontinues praying and will certainly be lost.

As regards subjects for meditation, nothing is more useful than to meditate on the four last things — death, judgment, hell, and heaven. It is especially advantageous to meditate on death, to imagine oneself expiring on a bed of sickness, with the crucifix in our hands and on the point of entering eternity. But to one who loves Jesus Christ and is ever seeking to increase his love, no meditation is more effective than that on the Passion of the Redeemer. All the lovers of Jesus Christ love to dwell on Mount Calvary, where no air is breathed but the air of divine love. When we behold a God dying for our love and dying in order to gain our love, it will be impossible not to love Him deeply. Such darts of love constantly issue forth from the wounds of Christ crucified as to pierce even hearts of stone.

The fourth means of perfection and of persevering in the grace of God is frequently to receive Holy Communion. St. Teresa remarks that those who communicate most frequently are found further advanced in perfection, that there is greater spirituality where frequent Communion is practiced. There is no sacrament so capable of enkindling divine love in souls as the holy sacrament of the Eucharist. For here Jesus Christ bestows on us His whole self to unite us to Himself by means of holy love. Yes, the devil has a great horror of this sacrament, for souls derive from it immense strength to advance in divine love.

There are some timid souls, who, when urged to communicate more frequently, reply: "But I am not worthy." But, do you not know that the more you abstain from Communion, the

more unworthy you become? Depriving yourself of Holy Communion, you will have less strength, and will commit many faults. Venial faults should never restrain you from receiving Holy Communion.

"But in my past life I was very wicked." I reply: you must know that he who is weakest has most need of the doctor and of medicine. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is, at one and the same time, both our doctor and medicine. St. Ambrose said: "I, who am always sinning, always have need of medicine."

What a thought is this: "Today I have received Holy Communion and tomorrow I will receive again." Oh, how such a reflection keeps the soul attentive to avoid all defects and to do the will of God!

"But I have no devotion." If you mean sensible devotion — it is not necessary. Besides, God does not always grant it even to His most beloved souls. It is enough for you to have the devotion of a will determined to belong entirely to God and to make progress in His divine love. John Gerson says that he who refrains from receiving Holy Communion because he does not feel that devotion which he would like to feel, acts like a man who does not approach the fire because he does not feel warm.

But why do so few souls approach the Divine Banquet frequently or even daily?

Unfortunately, some are prevented by mortal sin, which separates them from Him Who is their Life. It is with good reason that they recognize themselves as unworthy of Holy Communion. For to communicate in such a state would be a horrible sacrilege.

Others live in the state of grace. But they are absorbed in the things of earth. They love Our Lord but little

and prefer to remain in their tepidity. They do not desire to become more fervent by approaching often, still less every day, to the Flame of Love, which is Jesus Christ!

The practice of making a *spiritual Communion* will also contribute very much to keeping fervor alive in the soul. St. Thomas says that spiritual Communion consists in an ardent desire to receive Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament. The saints were careful to employ it several times a day. The method of making it is to utilize some such words as these: "My Jesus, I believe that Thou art really present in

the Most Holy Sacrament. I love Thee, and I desire Thee. Come to my soul. I embrace Thee, and I beseech Thee never to allow me to be separated from Thee again."

This spiritual Communion may be employed several times a day: at our morning and evening prayers, and when we recollect ourselves on different occasions. The Dominican Sister, Blessed Angela of the Cross, used to say: "If my confessor had not taught me this method of communicating spiritually several times a day, I should not have trusted myself to live."

### *A Better Man Than I Am*

When the devil was looking around for a sin that everybody except the very humblest and most saintly would succumb to, he let us feed our ego by "looking down" on people who do not think or do exactly as we ourselves think and do. As a result:

Buyers look down on salesmen and salesmen look down on buyers.

Politicians look down on citizens' committees, and almost everybody looks down on politicians.

Bridge players and poker players scorn hearts and rummy addicts.

City people look down on country rubes and farmers on city slickers.

College professors on business men and business men on teachers.

Locomotive engineers on conductors and airplane pilots on engineers.

Medical specialists on general practitioners.

Secretaries on stenographers and stenographers on bosses.

Corporals on privates and all other ranks on second lieutenants.

Neighbor on neighbor. Color on color. Nationality on nationality.

The list is endless.

How stupid. Look up if you would grow up. Only the egoist looks down.

A thousand philosophers have expressed it in one way or another.

Distilled, it amounts to this: *Everyone I meet is in some way my superior.*

—*Jungle News*

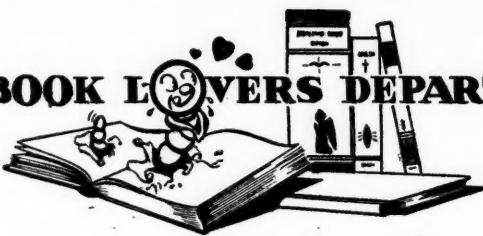
### *Wreathed*

Little Johnny went with his family to meet an uncle who was returning from a journey overseas. As the boat docked the members of the family searched the faces of the in-coming passengers for a sign of the relative but could not find him.

Suddenly Johnny cried out excitedly: "I see him! I see him!" Pointing to a port-hole in the ship he shouted: "Up there, with the boat around his neck."

—*Sign*

# BOOK LOVERS DEPARTMENT



Conducted by Thomas Tobin

## CATHOLIC AUTHOR OF THE MONTH

Reverend Charles Hugo Doyle, 1904 —

### I. Life:

Charles Hugo Doyle was born in Kings-  
ton, Ontario, Canada, on April 12, 1904. He attended St. Mary's School and Regi-  
polis College is his home city. In 1922 he  
began his philosophical studies at St. Jos-  
eph's Seminary in Edmonton, Alberta, and  
he transferred to St. Augustine's Seminary  
in Toronto for the theological course. He  
was ordained to the priesthood on Decem-  
ber 22, 1928. During the time of his studies  
in St. Joseph's Seminary he saw the great  
need of priests in the West of Canada and  
volunteered to serve in the Archdiocese of  
Edmonton. After one year as assistant pas-  
tor, Father Doyle was appointed pastor at  
Brosseau. One year afterwards he was  
changed to the pastorate of Blessed Sacra-  
ment Church, Wainright, Alberta. Three  
years after he assumed this office, a serious  
illness caused him to be hospitalized for a  
year. The Archbishop then sent him to New  
York for further treatment. Father Doyle  
is now temporary assistant at St. Theresa's  
Church, North Tarrytown, New York,  
where his knowledge of French enables  
him to care for a group of French-speaking  
parishioners.

### II. Writings:

During the three years of editorship of  
the diocesan weekly, the *Western Catholic*,  
Father Doyle had ample opportunity to  
develop his flair for writing. But it wasn't  
until the leisure of one year spent in the

hospital that he resolved to write books.  
He was amazed to learn that only one girl  
from a Catholic school chose Pope Pius  
XI as the world's greatest statesman in a  
contest. Father Doyle resolved to make the  
Pope much better known to the young.  
This interest in the papacy has resulted in  
several books: *Our Holy Father, Pope  
Pius XII* is an illustrated life of the Pope  
written for children; *We Have A Pope* is  
a life of Pius XII for high school students;  
*The Life of Pope Pius XII* is a full length  
biography.

Father Doyle's other field has been that  
of the Cana movement. One of the first  
books published in this field is his book,  
*Cana is Forever*, an excellent publication  
for anyone who wishes to know the spirit  
of the Cana Movement.

### III. The Book:

His latest book, *Sins of Parents*, is an-  
other work that has grown out of the Cana  
Movement. Its subtitle, *Counsels on Mar-  
riage and Youth Guidance*, reveals its pur-  
pose. The eight chapters are divided equally  
under two heads: Sins of Commission and  
Sins of Omission. The author does not  
spare any punches in hitting out against  
the principal evils that destroy the home  
and injure children. Parents as well as all  
those concerned professionally or personal-  
ly with the safety of the home could well  
read *Sins of Parents*.

## FEBRUARY BOOK REVIEWS

### BOOKS ON MARY

*The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary.* By Anne Catherine Emmerich. Translated by Sir Michael Palair. 383 pp. Springfield, Ill.: Templegate. \$3.75.

*Our Lady Speaks.* By Pere Leon Bonnet. Translated by Leonard J. Doyle. 283 pp. St. Meinrad, Ind.: Grail Publication. \$3.00.

*The Story of the Rosary.* By J. G. Shaw. 175 pp. Milwaukee, Wis.: Bruce Publishing Co. \$3.25.

*The Rosary in Action.* By John S. Johnson. 271 pp. St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder Co. \$1.75. Paper cover.

*The Rosary.* By Thomas Schwertner, O.P. Revised by Vincent M. Martin, O.P. 137 pp. Milwaukee, Wis.: Bruce Publishing Co. \$2.75.

Two Pamphlets by Grail: *Hello Blessed Mother.* By Rosemarion V. Staudacher; *The Queenship of Mary Most Holy.* By James E. Sherman, S.T.D. Both .15 each.

One of the most controversial books of the last century was *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord* which was based on the visions of Anne Catherine Emmerich and edited by Clement Brentano. Many scholars doubted the authenticity of the revelations and the historical accuracy of the details of the Passion as seen by the visionary. Much of the difficulty would have been avoided if attention had been paid to the preface which disclaimed historical value but presented the book merely as a "pious nun's Lenten meditations." This same disclaimer is prefaced to the latest book, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin*, which is also based on Anne Catherine's revelations. Although begun by Clement Brentano, it was finished after his death by friends. It might be well to remind readers that no Catholic is obliged to believe private revelations such as those received by Anne Catherine, but at times the Church does say that the revelations are not contrary to Catholic doctrine

and can be read by the faithful with spiritual profit. With this caution in mind and with attention to the footnotes which point out any inaccuracy, this book can be read with interest and inspiration.

*Our Lady Speaks* is a book on the Blessed Virgin of unusual merit because of the literary device used and because of the solidly doctrinal contents. With literary license the learned French author has the Blessed Virgin speak in the first person to the reader. The titles from the Litany are used as the structural background for the work. The matter is of a very high doctrinal and practical nature that gives the book a high value. It is written in the French style of meditations made popular by Bossuet. Busy preachers will find in it many points for use in the pulpit. We recommend *Our Lady Speaks* as an exceptional book on the Blessed Virgin.

*The Story of the Rosary* is a very interesting history of the origin and development of the rosary by J. G. Shaw, who has presented a popular account of the findings of scholars during the past fifty years. Many people do know that one of the most intense and even bitter controversies about the origin of the rosary was stirred up by a series of articles by Father Herbert Thurston, S.J. In these essays Father Thurston denied that the Blessed Virgin had directly given the rosary to St. Dominic. Naturally, a storm of theological and historical warfare arose. Though the fight is still waged, the smoke has cleared away a bit and both sides have taken positions more in harmony with the facts. The author does a good job of objective reporting.

Naturally, not all or even the greater portion of the book is given over to the controversy. It is very fascinating to see the author trace the historical development of the rosary from the Divine Office of the priests down to its present form. Interesting to learn is the fact that some rosaries

### The *Liguorian*

in times past had as many as 195 mysteries! Readers will be better instructed about their rosary and this knowledge should help them in their devotion. *The Story of the Rosary* is well recommended as an enlightening presentation of the gradual development of the rosary as we know it now.

*The Rosary in Action* is a volume that has grown out of the personal experience of a Catholic layman, John S. Johnson. His contact with the rosary goes back many years to his boyhood before the first world war. He confesses that the rosary never meant too much to him personally until more recent years. The big difficulty he felt was his inability to meditate on the mysteries, so that the rosary became merely a mechanical recitation of the prayer. In order to help lay Catholics appreciate this popular and powerful prayer, Mr. Johnson has written *The Rosary in Action*. After a brief introduction about the origin of the rosary, the book explains the principal points of meditation and furnishes special meditations on each mystery in half of the total pages. This should help all to a more profitable recitation of the great chaplet of Our Lady.

The publishers have reissued a popular book of Father Thomas Schwertner, O.P., *The Rosary*. Its subtitle, *A Social Remedy*, reveals the emphasis of the contents on the rosary as a means of correcting the social ills of our day. Even more so now than when the book first appeared, its message is needed by the world. The short and fervent chapters will be of great spiritual help to readers.

*Hello, Blessed Mother* is a delightful booklet of meditations or informal talks with the Blessed Virgin by various members of the family.

*The Queenship of Mary Most Holy* is a theological presentation of Mary's new feast. Solid and timely.

### A SCHEEBEN CLASSIC

*Nature and Grace*. By Matthias Joseph Scheeben. Translated by Cyril Vollert,

S.J. 361 pp. St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder Co. \$4.95.

The name and fame of Father Matthias Joseph Scheeben has gone far beyond the nineteenth century in which he lived and died. The great task he set for himself was to show the beauty of the supernatural life and to defend this life against the naturalism of his times. *Nature and Grace* is the book of his early years that clearly examines the elements of both nature and supernature. The four parts discuss: Preliminary Notions; Nature and Natural Life; Grace and the Supernatural Order; Union of Nature and Grace. In our day, when the forces of naturalism are still trying to destroy the supernatural, this book by Father Scheeben will instruct and edify readers.

### CHRISTOPHER BOOK

*Stop, Look and Live*. By James Keller. 365 pp. New York, N. Y.: Hanover House. \$2.00.

Father James Keller has made the Christopher Movement very popular by his writings and lectures. Many daily newspapers carry his syndicated column. *Stop, Look and Live* is the latest book in the "thought for a day" series of *Three Minutes a Day, One Moment Please, and Just for Today*. The one page reflections on the meaning of life can aid the reader toward a more intense spiritual life. Most of the essays begin with a modern story or incident that serves to point a moral. Recommended to busy people who still would like to reflect and meditate.

### BOOK OF CARTOONS

*Priests are Like People*. By Joe Lane. Compiled by Eileen O'Hayer. 72 pp. Chicago, Ill.: Extension Magazine. \$1.00.

This is the fourth book of religious cartoons published by *Extension Magazine*. Joe Lane, the cartoonist, has captured the spirit of good humor and satire in his sketches about priests. Bishop Sheen is the subject of several cartoons. The captions are short and to the point. Readers will here enjoy some excellent Catholic humor.

## BEST SELLERS

A Moral Evaluation of Current Books, Published at the University of Scranton, Pa.

### I. Suitable for general reading:

Tante Marie's French Pastry—*Turgeon*  
The Enormous Turtle—*Madden*  
The Benevolent Treasure—*Wentworth*  
Royal Mother—*Ellis*  
A Key to Death—*Lockridge*  
The Path to Rome—*Belloc*  
The Family Nobody Wanted—*Doss*  
The Meaning of Maryknoll—*Nevins*  
The Betty Furness Westinghouse Cook-book—*Kiene*  
Lives of the Saints—*Plassman*  
The Deliverance of Sister Cecilia—*Brinkley*  
The Heart of O. Henry—*Kramer*  
Children's Shepherd—*Burton*  
The Queen is in the Kitchen—*McCarthy*  
Love of Seven Dolls—*Gallico*

### II. Suitable only for adults:

A. Because of advanced style and contents:  
The Devil Threw Dice—*Dean*  
Another Morgue Heard From—*Davis*  
The Good Trail—*Geagon*  
The Untold Story of Douglas MacArthur—*Hunt*  
Life is Worth Living—*Sheen*  
Not Without Tears—*Day*  
Son of Oscar Wilde—*Holland*  
God's Secret Armies—*Johnson*  
A Program for Conservatives—*Kirk*  
Abraham Lincoln: the Prairie Years and the War Years—*Sandburg*  
The Bulls of Parral—*Steen*  
The Encyclopedia of Child Care and Guidance—*Gruenberg*  
My Name is Tom Connally—*Connally*  
The Ghost Voyage—*de Poncins*  
The Blue Continent—*Quilici*  
Have Fun With Your Children—*Horwitz*  
The Jacksonians—A Study in Administrative History, 1829-1861—*White*  
The American Christmas—*Barnett*  
Obit Delayed—*Nielsen*  
Glory, God and Gold—*Wellman*

Oslo Intrigue, A Woman's Memoir of the Norwegian Resistance—*Astrup*  
The Memoirs of Aga Khan—*Khan*  
The Art of Teaching—*Higget*  
The American Political Tradition—*Hofstadter*

Thoughts of My Cats—*Marshall*  
The Lord—*Guardini*  
Aesthetics and History—*Berenson*

B. Because of immoral incidents which do not, however, invalidate the book as a whole:

The Five Seasons—*Eska*  
The Eddie Chapman Story—*Owen*  
The Cup of Fury—*Felsen*  
Sign of the Pagan—*Fuller*  
The Feast of July—*Bates*  
The Foster Brothers—*Frankland*  
Jubal Troop—*Wellman*  
The Spanish Bride—*O'Meara*  
The Woman With No Past—*Groussard*  
The Sorceress—*Weinreb*  
They Ran for Their Lives—*Brick*

III. Permissible for the discriminating reader:

The Invisible Writing—*Koestler*  
Acquainted with the Night—*Boll*  
From Pamps to Hedgerows and Downs—*Haymaker*  
The French Revolution, 1788-1792—*Salvemini*  
The Immoralist—*Gide*  
Yankees and God—*Smith*

IV. Not recommended to any reader:

The Devil—*Papini*  
Bugles West—*Gruber*  
Love and Money—*Caldwell*  
Moonscape—*Waltari*  
Rap Sheet: My Life Story—*Audett*  
Walk Toward the Rainbow—*Clayton*  
The Blunderer—*Higsmith*  
The Lion at Morning—*Longstreet*  
The Marching Wind—*Clark*  
The Wicked Pavilion—*Powell*  
To Find a Killer—*White*  
Benton's Row—*Yerby*



## *Lucid Intervals*

Mother: "How are you getting along in your art class, Harry?"

Harry: "Fine, but I wish I had a smarter teacher. Today I drew a horse on the board and she didn't even know what it was."

The young lady was visiting a mink farm. After admiring a beautiful collection of animals she asked her guide:

"Just how many times can a mink be skinned for his fur?"

"Only three times, Miss," replied the guide solemnly. "Any more would spoil his temper."

An oil station attendant said to his new assistant:

"Here comes another I.W.W. customer."

"What do they usually want?"

"Information, Water and Wind."

A repair man laboriously climbed up to fix a large clock in a steeple. After he had finished his work and climbed down again, a curious lady, who had been watching him with great interest, asked:

"Was there something wrong with the clock?"

"No, lady," came the reply. "I'm near-sighted and just climbed up to see what time it is."

Upon receiving a complaint about an issue of bread, the officer of the day snapped:

"If Napoleon had had that bread in Russia, he would have eaten it with the greatest of pleasure."

"Yes, sir," spoke up the sergeant. "But it was fresh then."

A farmer brought his brother to see a psychiatrist.

"My brother," he explained, "thinks he is a hen."

"Good heavens, man," said the startled psychiatrist, "how long has this been going on?"

"For about four years, doctor," replied the farmer.

"And you did nothing about it?"

"Nothing, doctor, nothing."

"Why in the name of all that's reasonable, didn't you bring him to see me sooner?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, doctor," said the farmer apologetically, "we needed the eggs."

Inmate No. 5722 fingered his electric flashlight lovingly.

"If I turn this beam straight up in the air," he said to No. 5723, "I'll bet you a thousand dollars you can't climb up it."

"I'm wise to your tricks," sneered No. 5723. "I'd get half-way up and you'd turn it off."

A kind-hearted lady was accosted by a shabby-looking man.

"Please, ma'am," he whined, "can you spare a little cash for a poor fellow?"

The lady hesitated, sniffing. But he was such a pitiful object that she opened her purse.

"Here," she said, handing him a coin, "take this, but I hope you won't spend it for vile liquor."

The needy one scanned the frugal hand-out.

"With what you gimme, ma'am," he said sadly, "I can't get no other kind."

## Amongst Ourselves

Representatives of several groups around the country have written to us to say that they are using THE LIGUORIAN as a text or starting point for monthly discussion club meetings. Some have asked for suggestions as to how they can make their meetings more effective and fruitful. Since THE LIGUORIAN regularly treats of very practical problems that must be faced by all Catholics today, it can be a very appropriate instigator of the kind of thinking and talking that is bound to make those who discuss its articles more ready to cope with situations that arise in their own lives. To those who have asked for ideas about running a LIGUORIAN discussion club, we have given the following outline.

1. All members of the group should read the current issue of THE LIGUORIAN before the meeting that is to discuss it.

2. Individual members should be assigned certain articles or features on which they will be expected to comment in a special way at the meeting. The assignments can be given even before a new LIGUORIAN has come, if this is necessary, on the basis of a certain number of pages, or by dividing an issue into 1) Feature articles; 2) One page articles; 3) Regular departments (Sideglances, Pointed Paragraphs, Liguoriana, etc.)

3. Discussion leaders should be given ten to fifteen minutes to com-

ment on what they have read and to start discussion in answer to the following questions: a) What new insights into teachings of your faith, or unknown or forgotten facts or doctrines, were brought home to you by your reading? b) Are there any common erroneous opinions of non-Catholics, or of ignorant Catholics, answered by what you read? c) Have you found any pamphlets or books or articles in other periodicals that deal with the same topics and shed further light on it? (Pamphlet racks, bookstores or libraries should be visited beforehand with the express purpose of looking for such material.)

This schedule should be rather loosely followed, so that, if a certain article or topic or question raises healthy discussion that lasts for an hour or so, the purpose of the meeting should be considered amply fulfilled.

There is great good to be attained by discussion of Catholic truths with one's fellow-Catholics and, at times, with interested non-Catholics. There is so much organized publicity for the principles of secularism and indifferentism in religion on all sides today that those who have the truth or are looking for the truth need to help one another cling to it. Discussion meetings fulfill this purpose, and we hope that THE LIGUORIAN will provide the topics, the evidence and the arguments that will inspire many such meetings.

### IT IS EASY . . .

to determine the date when your subscription to THE LIGUORIAN expires. Look at the address stencilled on the back cover of one of your copies. If the numbers at the end of the first line read "7-54," your subscription began with the 7th month of 1953, and the last issue you are entitled to receive is that of June, 1954.

It saves us time and money if you renew promptly, or before your subscription expires. Just cut the stencilled address from the back cover and send it in with renewal payment. Be sure, too, to cut this address from one of your copies and send it in when requesting a change of address. We are charged extra postage for every copy sent to a wrong address after you have moved.

## Your Part in Press Month

If you are getting something good for yourself out of *The Liguorian*, did you ever stop to think that maybe somebody else whom you know might get the same or even greater good out of it? Behind the institution of Catholic Press month is the idea of making reading Catholics think along these lines.

A friend's birthday, or wedding, or conversion, is a wonderful time to give a present of a year's subscription to *The Liguorian*. Or even a friend's questions about religion, or interest in problems such as are discussed in *The Liguorian*, may provide the occasion for such a gift.

If you don't have the money to pay for such gifts, at least you can talk about *The Liguorian*, pass your copies along, point out certain articles to be read by persons who have asked questions about topics treated in them. Do something to spread the word of truth during Catholic Press month.

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